

# DENTAL HYGIENE

## Higher Education Center at National City

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**Map:** <https://goo.gl/maps/NbVD4ovHYGB2> (<https://goo.gl/maps/NbVD4ovHYGB2/>)

## General Description

A dental hygienist is a licensed healthcare professional, oral health educator, and clinician who, as a co-therapist with a dentist, provides preventive, educational, and therapeutic services supporting total health for the control of oral diseases and the promotion of oral health. A registered dental hygienist has graduated from a minimum of two year college program that includes classroom studies and extensive supervised clinical experience.

The program prepares students for a career in dental hygiene through the study of humanities, social and natural sciences, and the field of dental hygiene. Emphasis is on clinical practice in the context of dental hygiene care. Graduates are eligible to apply to take national, and regional examinations to earn the RDH license.

The dental hygienist may work in general and specialty oral health practices. Other areas of employment include programs for research, professional education, and community health; hospital and institutional care of disabled persons; federal programs, such as the armed services; or other health service locations as specified in statute or as authorized by the state board of dentistry/dental hygiene.

Dental hygiene students and all healthcare providers are at higher risk for exposure to infectious disease, bodily fluids, and bloodborne pathogens. The SWC dental hygiene program follows OSHA standards and college requirements for the prevention of exposure to infectious diseases.

## Career Options

Although the dental hygienist primarily provides preventive and therapeutic services in a private dental office or clinic, he/she may provide services in public health settings, schools, skilled nursing facilities and mobile clinics. Clinical practice generally requires an associate degree education. The dental hygienist may also serve as an administrator/manager for community dental health programs or dental product companies, an educator in dental hygiene and dental school programs, or a researcher in a university or corporate setting. Many of these roles may require a bachelor's or graduate-level degree.

## Program Goals

**Upon completion of the dental hygiene program the graduate will:**

- Demonstrate the knowledge to pass the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE).
- Demonstrate the clinical skills necessary to pass the Regional Registered Dental Hygienist Licensure Examination.
- Demonstrate the knowledge to pass the California Dental Law and Ethics Examinations.
- Secure entry-level employment as a dental hygienist.

Degree/Certificate Options	Major Code
<b>Associate in Science Degree: Career/Technical</b>	
Dental Hygiene ( <a href="http://catalog.swccd.edu/associate-degree-certificate-programs/dental-hygiene/dental-hygiene-as/">http://catalog.swccd.edu/associate-degree-certificate-programs/dental-hygiene/dental-hygiene-as/</a> )	02380

Refer to Dental Hygiene Program within the SWC website for admission requirements.

Consult with a counselor to develop a Student Education Plan (SEP), which lists the courses necessary to achieve your academic goal.

### Faculty

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