



## A Career in Dental Hygiene

This video resource is provided to help kids learn about what a dental hygienist does and what a career in dental hygiene is like—straight from a registered dental hygienist’s mouth!

Dental hygienists play a very important role in the health of your teeth, mouth, and gums. Each day, they support the work of the dentist by reviewing dental and health history, screening patients, cleaning teeth, taking dental X-rays, talking with patients about preventive care, teaching patients how to take care of their smiles, documenting treatments, and talking with the dentist about each patient.

In this video, kids will hear directly from a current dental hygienist about why she wanted to become a dental hygienist, the steps she took to begin her career, and why she likes working with patients each day.

As you watch this video, you can talk with kids about their experience visiting the dentist and what they remember about seeing a dental hygienist. For example, ask kids to think about the different steps they remember happening when they visited the dentist. Did they check in when they arrived? Did the hygienist ask them questions about how often they brush or floss? Did the hygienist clean their teeth or take X-rays?

To become a dental hygienist, you will need to be licensed by the state you’re working in. And the minimum level of education required is an associate’s degree (that’s a two-year degree program after high school).

Teachers can also pause the video when the hygienist talks about the schooling required to become a hygienist to ask open-ended questions about why some careers require additional training. For example, why might a person who works in healthcare need to have extra knowledge about the body? Or why might a hygienist be required to learn about anatomy, biology, and the skeletal system?

Finally, teachers might watch the video and then ask kids to talk about their career goals or ideas of what they’d like to do when they grow up. Does a job in healthcare sound interesting? Why or why not? This is a great time to encourage kids to explore all their interests and to continue to learn about all the different career paths that are available to them.