

# Standards of Practice



## INFORMED CONSENT

### STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist must obtain the client's ongoing **informed consent** for the initiation and delivery of **dental hygiene services**.

### PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Obtain informed consent from the client or from the appropriate individual in accordance with applicable legislation.
2. Support informed choice by communicating relevant information openly, truthfully, and in recognition of the client's needs, values, and capacity to understand.
3. Ensure the client:
  - a) is aware of the right to withdraw consent at any time;
  - b) is free of undue influence, duress or coercion in making the consent decision;
  - c) receives a proper explanation that includes but is not limited to:
    - i. recommended procedures or strategies (including assessments or interventions);
    - ii. exact nature and anticipated benefits of the proposed procedures or strategies;
    - iii. common risks, significant risks, side effects, and costs;
    - iv. diagnosis and prognosis, when determined;
    - v. reasonable alternative procedures or strategies available, and the associated common risks and significant risks;
    - vi. consequences of refusing recommendations.
  - d) demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the information provided.
4. Respect the client's right to:
  - a) make informed choices, consult, and request additional information;
  - b) refuse proposed services;
  - c) withdraw previously provided consent at any time.
5. Seek new informed consent for each specific dental hygiene service, and in any of the following scenarios:
  - a) the client's condition has changed;
  - b) the evidence supporting the procedure or strategy has changed;
  - c) the client has withdrawn consent;
  - d) the client has refused the involvement of particular individuals in their care.
6. Document informed consent or refusal from the client. If consent is verbal, then a notation must be made to that effect in the client record.
7. In situations of dental hygiene research, obtain approval from the appropriate research ethics authority and informed consent from the client prior to their participation in studies.

## CLIENT EXPECTATION

The **client** can expect that they will be informed of the options, risks, costs, and benefits of proposed services, asked to provide their consent, and that the dental hygienist will respect their right to question, refuse options, and/or withdraw from services at any time.

## GLOSSARY

---

### DENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES

Dental hygiene services include the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of oral health conditions through therapeutic, educational, and preventive dental hygiene procedures and strategies that promote wellness. These procedures and strategies include restricted activities authorized by the Alberta Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation. Dental hygiene services are provided to individual clients or communities by dental hygienists in their roles as clinicians, educators, researchers, administrators, health promoters, and consultants.

---

### INFORMED CONSENT

Receiving the client's permission to proceed with a proposed service following a process of decision-making leading to an informed choice. Informed consent involves ongoing communication between the parties involved. In the case of a minor or others who do not have the capacity to provide informed consent, the agreement must come from a legal guardian or substitute decisionmaker legally authorised to act on behalf of a client.