

Standards of Practice



CLINICAL THERAPY

This standard applies to a dental hygienist providing clinical therapy to a client.

STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist applies their professional knowledge, training, and experience to competently provide clinical **client-centred** care safely and effectively.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Obtain the client's ongoing informed consent to proposed **dental hygiene services**.
2. Apply appropriate assessment strategies, techniques, tools, and indices.
3. As diagnostically necessary, interpret radiographs to accurately assess the client's oral health status.
4. Detect findings that are abnormal, atypical, or unhealthy, and inform the client.
5. Use critical thinking and professional judgment to interpret assessment data, determine a **diagnosis** and prognosis, and inform the client.
6. Collaborate and communicate effectively with the client to determine a **care plan** using a client-centred approach.
7. Consider all aspects of a client's overall health and wellbeing, including **determinants of health** and risk factors when planning and implementing **evidence-informed** dental hygiene services.
8. Identify clients for whom the initiation or continuation of services is contraindicated based on interpretation of the client's health history and/or clinical data and refer appropriately.
9. Deliver dental hygiene services that are clinically required for the client and are consistent with the client's **informed consent**.
10. Effectively recognize and manage the client's physical or emotional discomfort and pain.
11. Monitor and evaluate the client's response to dental hygiene services and adjust services, implement alternatives, or discontinue services accordingly.
12. Make clinically appropriate referrals when the client's needs for assessment, diagnosis or treatment are best addressed in collaboration with or by another provider.

CLIENT EXPECTATION

The **client** can expect the dental hygienist to assess relevant data, make an informed diagnosis, develop and implement client-centred goals and plans, and evaluate dental hygiene services.

GLOSSARY

DIAGNOSIS

Identification of an oral health condition informed by assessment findings, clinical judgement, professional knowledge, and the best available evidence.

CARE PLAN

“Statement of goals, evidence-based interventions, and appointment schedule supporting the diagnosis.” (Bowen & Pieren, 2020, p. 363)

CLIENT-CENTRED

Person-, family- and community- centred approaches to care. This approach recognizes the partnership and sharing of power between the client and health care providers to improve clinical outcomes and satisfaction with care. This includes demonstrating attitudes and behaviours that are respectful of the whole person and their preferences. The term “community-centred approaches to care” relates to centralizing the community in all aspects. (RNAO 2015, FDHRC)

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.

DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The broad range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors that determine individual and population health. (Canada.ca)

EVIDENCE-INFORMED

A formalized process which involves identifying, searching for, and interpreting the result of the best available evidence to inform decision-making processes.

INFORMED CONSENT

Receiving 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.