

Standards of Practice



CONTINUITY OF CARE

STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist ensures continuity of care and only discontinues care in a manner that is safe and ethical.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Support the client's right to choose their provider of **dental hygiene services** by:
 - a) Informing the client of the option to receive consistent, ongoing care from a specific dental hygienist;
 - b) Recognizing when the client has an expectation of ongoing and consistent care with the dental hygienist and taking reasonable steps to ensure that this is achieved.
2. Ensure the client is aware of the dental hygienist who will be providing care.
3. Take reasonable steps to ensure that the client has an alternate oral health care provider or has been given options to arrange for an alternate oral health care provider in the event that the dental hygienist leaves a practice.
4. Direct a client to contact the College in the event the client is searching for a dental hygienist who was their previous care provider.

The dental hygienist who discontinues care for the client must...

5. Not discontinue care based on:
 - a) A prohibited ground of discrimination as per the [Alberta Human Rights Act](#);
 - b) The client's values, life circumstances, or culture;
 - c) The client's failure to keep appointments or pay outstanding fees unless advance notice has been given to the client;
 - d) Relocation of their dental hygiene practice.
6. Give reasonable advance notice to the client.
7. Document the reason for discontinuing care in the client's record.

The dental hygienist who closes or transfers ownership of a dental hygiene practice must...

8. Ensure clients have ongoing access to their health information and are informed of how their health information can be accessed.
9. Provide the College with evidence of compliance with the Standards of Practice including but not limited to:
 - a) Reasonable notice provided to clients;
 - b) Steps taken to ensure continuity of care;
 - c) Location and disposition of client records;
 - d) Manner in which clients may access their records;
 - e) Any other matter relevant to the closure as may be requested by the College.

CLIENT EXPECTATION

The **client** can expect that the dental hygienist supports the client's choice of dental hygiene care provider. In the event that the dental hygienist discontinues care, the client will be given options for other oral health care providers to continue the client's care.

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 by dental hygienists in their roles as clinicians, educators, researchers, administrators, health promoters, and consultants.

CARE PLAN

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