

Standards of Practice



INFORMED CONSENT

STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist must obtain the patient'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 patient 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 patient's needs, values, and goals.
3. Ensure the patient:
 - a) Is informed 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; and
 - vi. Consequences of refusing recommendations.
 - d) Demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the information provided.
4. Respect the patient's right to:
 - a) Make informed choices, consult, and/or request additional information;
 - b) Refuse proposed services; and/or
 - c) Withdraw previously provided consent at any time during dental hygiene services.

5. Seek new informed consent for each specific procedure or strategy, and in any of the following scenarios:
 - a) The patient's condition has changed;
 - b) The evidence supporting the procedure or strategy has changed;
 - c) The patient has withdrawn consent; or
 - d) The patient has refused the involvement of particular individuals in their care.
6. Document informed consent or refusal from the patient. If consent is verbal, then a notation must be made to that effect in the patient record.
7. When conducting dental hygiene research, obtain approval from the appropriate research ethics authority and informed consent from the research participant.

PATIENT EXPECTATION

The patient 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: Any service that falls within the practice of the profession of dental hygienists as outlined in the [Health Professions Act](#) (Schedule 5, section 3).

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

INFORMED CHOICE: Critical elements of informed choice include disclosure (e.g., revealing pertinent information, including risks and benefits), voluntariness (e.g., the choice is not coerced or manipulated), and capacity. "Informed choice" encompasses "informed consent."

INFORMED CONSENT: Receiving the patient's written or verbal 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 decision-maker legally authorized to act on behalf of a patient.

LEGISLATION: Federal or provincial acts, regulations, or codes.