

WHAT IS DENTAL THERAPIST?

Dental therapists examine and provide routine treatment of teeth under the general supervision of dentists. They also help to promote preventive dental practices among school children and the broader community.

ROLES OF DENTAL THERAPIST

- Educate and motivate children to maintain good oral health
- Help to educate the community in the principles of preventive dentistry by addressing adult groups such as parents' groups, play groups and parents and citizens' associations
- Provide routine dental treatment for children, including dental examinations and diagnosis, cleaning, scaling and polishing teeth, filling cavities and extracting deciduous (baby) teeth under local anaesthetic
- Treat gum conditions, take X-rays of teeth and jaws, apply sealants and fluoride therapy, and take impressions for mouth-guard construction
- Bring more complex dental problems to the attention of dentists
- Work with managers of school canteens, advising them about healthy food
- Liaise with other health care providers.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- NSLHD Oral Health Services regularly advertise Dental Therapist positions.
- The public sector oral health services are the major employers of dental therapists. They work in fixed and mobile clinics promoting oral health care to children from pre-school to Year 10.
- Prospects are good and career opportunities include progression to senior clinical and administrative positions coordinating health promotion activities in dental health services state- or territory-wide, and positions in research and teaching.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

To become a dental therapist you have:

- to study oral health at university. Training courses provide dual training in dental therapy and dental hygiene;
- take high school courses in health, biology, chemistry, mathematics, speech and psychology, and
- apply for work experience in a school or community dental clinic.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Associate Degree in School Dental Therapy - 2 years full time at the Oral Health Centre of Western Australia-OHCWA, Curtin University: <http://publichealth.curtin.edu.au/programs/courses.cfm>

Bachelor of Oral Health – 3 years full time graduating with a dual qualification of dental therapy and dental hygiene; University of Sydney; Cumberland, Sydney Dental hospital and Westmead campuses: <http://www.dentistry.usyd.edu.au/student/boh.php>

Having prerequisites of biology and chemistry and Certificates III and IV in Dental Assisting can be beneficial.

DENTAL THERAPIST

SUPERVISION PROVIDED

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

WHAT SORT OF PERSON SHOULD I BE?

- Have a high standard of ethics
- Enjoy developing a rapport with children
- Have a good sense of caring and sensitivity
- Enjoy promoting good oral health through educating children and their parents

PERSONAL SKILLS REQUIRED OF DENTAL THERAPIST

- Good hand-eye coordination
- Able to do precise and detailed work
- Good interpersonal communication and cultural sensitivity skills
- Able to establish rapport with children
- Able to plan, analyse, organise and problem solve
- Able to work as part of a team.

CONTACT Us: Recruitment Services Unit

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