

# Dental Assistants

SOC: 31-9091 • Career Profile Report

## ■ Key Facts

<b>\$47,300</b> Median Salary	<b>381,900</b> Employment	<b>+6.0%</b> Growth Rate
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## ■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Postsecondary

## ■ Automation Risk Assessment

**Medium Risk** - 48.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.  
This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

## ■ Work-Life Balance

**7.4/10** - Good work-life balance

## ■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.8/10	Investigative	6.0/10
Artistic	4.4/10	Social	8.4/10
Enterprising	4.6/10	Conventional	7.4/10

## ■ Top Skills Required

Detail oriented, Dexterity, Interpersonal skills, Listening skills, Organizational skills

### ✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

### ■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

## ■ What They Do

Dental Assistants provide support to dentists by **preparing patients, sterilizing instruments, and assisting with dental procedures**. They manage administrative tasks, maintain patient records, and ensure a safe and comfortable environment. Their work is critical in dental care, patient safety, and office efficiency.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy healthcare, patient interaction, and hands-on clinical work.

## What Do Dental Assistants Do?

These professionals prepare patients for treatment, assist during procedures, and handle administrative and clinical tasks.

Common responsibilities include:

- Preparing examination and treatment rooms
- Sterilizing and organizing dental instruments
- Assisting dentists during procedures by handling instruments and materials
- Taking and recording patient vital signs and dental histories
- Educating patients on oral hygiene and post-treatment care
- Scheduling appointments and maintaining patient records
- Performing basic laboratory tasks, such as making impressions or temporary restorations

## Key Areas of Dental Assistance

Dental assistants may focus on clinical tasks, administrative duties, or specialized procedures:

- **Chairside Assistance:** Supporting dentists during exams and treatments
- **Patient Preparation and Education:** Preparing patients and providing oral care instructions
- **Sterilization and Infection Control:** Maintaining hygiene and safety standards
- **Administrative Support:** Scheduling, recordkeeping, and billing
- **Laboratory Tasks:** Creating impressions, molds, and temporary dental devices

## Skills and Abilities Needed

Dental assistants combine technical, clinical, and interpersonal skills.

### ***Core Professional Skills***

### ***Personal Qualities That Matter***

## Education and Career Pathway

This role typically requires formal education and practical training:

- **Postsecondary Certificate or Diploma:** Dental assisting or related program
- **On-the-Job Training:** Learning office procedures, patient care, and clinical tasks
- **Certification (optional but recommended):** Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) credential
- **Clinical Experience:** Gaining hands-on exposure to procedures and office workflow
- **Continuing Education:** Staying current on dental practices, safety standards, and technology

## Where Do Dental Assistants Work?

They are employed in organizations providing dental and oral healthcare:

- Dental Offices and Clinics
- Orthodontic and Specialty Dental Practices
- Hospitals and Public Health Clinics
- Dental Laboratories (limited roles)

- Educational or Community Health Programs

Work environments include treatment rooms, offices, laboratories, and public health settings.

## Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires attention to detail, manual dexterity, and strong interpersonal skills. Dental assistants must manage multiple tasks, assist with procedures, and ensure patient comfort and safety.

## Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy working in healthcare and supporting patient care
- Are detail-oriented and precise
- Have strong manual dexterity and coordination
- Can communicate effectively with patients and dental staff
- Want a career assisting dentists and contributing to oral health

## How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in biology, health sciences, and anatomy
- Volunteer or intern in dental clinics or healthcare settings
- Develop communication, organization, and manual skills
- Explore accredited dental assisting programs and certification options
- Gain hands-on experience through clinical practice or internships

**Dental assistants support dentists by providing clinical and administrative assistance, ensuring efficient, safe, and high-quality oral healthcare for patients.**

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*Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O\*NET*

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm>