

Dentists

SOC: 29-1020 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$179,210

Median Salary

149,300

Employment

+4.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Doctoral

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 8.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

5.1/10 - Fair work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.4/10	Investigative	8.6/10
Artistic	4.8/10	Social	9.0/10
Enterprising	5.4/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Detail oriented, Dexterity, Leadership skills, Organizational skills, Patience, Problem-solving skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat **dental and oral health problems**. They examine teeth and gums, perform procedures such as fillings, extractions, and root canals, and educate patients on oral hygiene. Their work is critical in healthcare, preventative care, and patient well-being.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy healthcare, problem-solving, and working directly with patients.

What Do Dentists Do?

These professionals assess oral health, perform treatments, and provide guidance to maintain healthy teeth and gums.

Common responsibilities include:

- Examining teeth, gums, and oral tissues
- Diagnosing dental conditions and planning treatment
- Performing procedures such as fillings, extractions, crowns, and root canals
- Educating patients on oral hygiene, diet, and preventive care
- Prescribing medications and monitoring patient health
- Maintaining accurate patient records
- Collaborating with dental hygienists, assistants, and other healthcare professionals

Key Areas of Dentistry

Dentists may specialize in particular types of care or procedures:

- General Dentistry: Providing routine exams, cleanings, and restorative care
- Orthodontics: Correcting teeth alignment and bite issues
- Periodontics: Treating gum disease and supporting structures of teeth
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery: Performing surgical procedures on teeth, jaws, and mouth
- Pediatric Dentistry: Caring for children's dental health and development

Skills and Abilities Needed

Dentists combine medical knowledge, technical skill, and patient care abilities.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Career Pathway

This role requires extensive education and professional training:

- Bachelor's Degree (minimum): Pre-dental or science-related field
- Dental School (Doctor of Dental Surgery or Doctor of Dental Medicine): Four-year professional program
- Licensure: Required to practice dentistry, including national and state exams
- Residency or Specialization (optional): For orthodontics, oral surgery, or other specialties
- Continuing Education: Staying current on dental techniques, technologies, and regulations

Where Do Dentists Work?

They are employed in settings that provide dental and oral healthcare:

- Private Dental Practices
- Hospitals and Clinics
- Public Health Organizations
- Dental Schools and Research Institutions

- Specialty Clinics

Work environments include offices, clinical treatment rooms, laboratories, and hospitals.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires extensive education, manual skill, and patient management. Dentists must perform precise procedures, diagnose conditions accurately, and communicate effectively with patients.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy healthcare and working directly with patients
- Have strong manual dexterity and technical skills
- Are detail-oriented and analytical
- Can communicate clearly and empathetically
- Want a career promoting oral health and patient well-being

How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in biology, chemistry, and health sciences
- Volunteer or intern in dental clinics or healthcare settings
- Develop manual dexterity and precision skills
- Explore shadowing opportunities with practicing dentists
- Research dental schools and licensure requirements

Dentists diagnose, treat, and prevent oral health problems, providing essential care that promotes overall health and well-being.

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Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>