

The Dental Office Team

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Most people have a pretty good idea what a dentist does because most have visited the dentist multiple times throughout their lifetime. They also know that becoming a dentist can take many years and is an expensive undertaking. But what about the other staff that work in the dentist's office? What is their function and what is their training?

The auxiliary dental staff play an indispensable role in the delivery of dental care. Just ask any dentist and they will tell you their office could not function without them. The staff are generally well-paid, often receive other benefits and in addition, frequently work close to where they live and have the job satisfaction of working as part of a close-knit caring team of health providers.



The person that works, quite literally, closest to the dentist is the Dental Assistant (DA). Depending on their level of training they may perform duties all the way from passing instruments and mixing dental materials to taking radiographs (X-rays), polishing teeth or putting on orthodontic brackets. The nice thing about choosing dental assisting as a career is that one can start as a level 1 Dental Assistant with training mostly on-the-job by the dentist and then progress to a Level 2 Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) with additional training, some of which can even be taken online. Some CDAs ultimately decide to go back to school and become dental hygienists with an opportunity to practice independently.

Not everyone is suited, or has the personality, to work in a busy dental office with a close-knit team of caring professionals. Nevertheless, as a dental patient, you know that being greeted and supported by caring, calm, and kind office staff makes a dental visit much more pleasant. Which of course brings us to the person who first greets and acknowledges you when you walk through the door – one of the front office staff. These members of the dental team also play a vital role in the smooth running of the office by answering the phone, scheduling patients and dealing with accounts and dental insurance companies.

The good news is that job opportunities for all positions in the dental office team are very strong, so how can someone get started? The best first step would probably be for them to talk to their dentist. Most would love to describe in more detail the benefits of being a valued member of a dental team and who knows, they might even be able to offer a job! At the very least, it might be possible to talk to one of the dental office staff directly.

Where can people find out about job training opportunities? For CDAs, there are eight accredited public schools and three non-accredited private schools in BC, a list of which can be found on the BCDA website under YourDentalHealth.ca/careers-in-dentistry, or download our [dental assisting career brochure](#). For Dental Receptionist training, there are courses available at Langara College as well as BCIT, VCC and many other private institutions.

Just think, a rewarding dental career could start now!

For more information, talk to your dentist or visit yourdentalhealth.ca for more information.

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