Dental hygienists are licensed oral health professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral diseases. They are graduates of accredited dental hygiene education programs and must take a written national board examination and a clinical examination before they are licensed to practice. Dental hygienists are in high demand; the occupation is projected to be one of the 30 fastest growing occupations.

What dental hygienists do:
• Performing oral health care assessments (reviewing patients’ health history, dental charting, oral cancer screening and evaluation of gum health)
• Expose, process and interpret dental radiographs (x-rays)
• Remove plaque and calculus
• Apply cavity-preventive agents such as fluorides and sealants
• Administer local anesthetic and/or nitrous oxide analgesia
• Educate patients on proper oral hygiene techniques, administer smoking cessation programs and more
• Dental hygienists also work as educators, researchers and administrators

Where dental hygienists work:
• Dental offices of general dentists and dental specialists
• Public health agencies, hospitals and community health clinics
• Public school systems, dental schools and dental hygiene education programs
• Dental product sales and research

Why consider a career in dental hygiene?

Why the UNMC Dental Hygiene Program?

Small class sizes and outstanding faculty
Students thrive in our close-knit, supportive environment, and receive personalized guidance and mentoring from faculty. Our faculty are dedicated practitioners, providing patient care using the latest clinical techniques, and many are involved with cutting-edge research, community health programs, and are leaders in national dental hygiene organizations.

Hands-on learning in patient care clinics
We have created a highly effective clinical model that closely resembles providing comprehensive care within a private practice. Dental hygiene students work in conjunction with dental students to provide patients with all the care they need. This clinic model promotes a sense of teamwork and helps students build relationships with their patients.

Hands-on learning in the community
Our many community outreach programs allow students to volunteer to provide services to underserved populations that have little or no access to oral health care. Students have memorable experiences helping those in need while they practice their clinical and communication skills.

Student-lead research projects
Our students lead cutting-edge, award-winning research projects with guidance from our faculty. Students have opportunities to present their research findings at national meetings and many receive top honors.

Cutting-edge technology
Students gain hands-on experience using the latest dental technology, and faculty members utilize the latest interactive learning technology, including e-modules.

Class of 2023 Profile
• Average GPA: 3.52
• Average ACT: 22
• 22 NE residents, 2 non-residents
• 12 from rural areas, 12 from urban
Program Details

- 24 students are accepted each year. After selection into the program, students spend two academic years and one summer session at the College of Dentistry in Lincoln or the West Division in Gering.
- The curriculum is organized into a four-year program leading to a bachelor of science degree in dental hygiene. The curriculum is fully approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation and graduates are eligible for examination and licensure in all states.
- Preparation for admission consists of approximately two academic years of study with the course work to be completed at any accredited college.

High School

Preparation for the study of dental hygiene begins in high school. The prospective dental hygiene student should take the following high school subjects:

- English: 3 years
- Mathematics/Algebra: 2 years
- Geometry: 1 year
- Biological Sciences (Biology): 1 year
- Chemistry: 1 year
- Foreign Language: (suggested, not required) 2 years

Pre-Dental Hygiene Requirements

High School

Preparation for the study of dental hygiene begins in high school. The prospective dental hygiene student should take the following high school subjects:

- English: 3 years
- Mathematics/Algebra: 2 years
- Geometry: 1 year
- Biological Sciences (Biology): 1 year
- Chemistry: 1 year
- Foreign Language: (suggested, not required) 2 years

College

The predental hygiene courses fulfill general requirements and provide the student with a core of knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication (English comp)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Anat or Anatomy &amp; Physiology I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Phys or Anatomy &amp; Physiology II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Chemistry</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Psychology</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication (speech/must give speeches)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities/Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Behavior, Culture, &amp; Social Organization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Hour Series</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six credit hours must be completed in the arts and humanities and three hours in social and behavioral sciences/human behavior, culture and social organization. A twelve-hour series (a 12-hour minor in one academic area) must be completed in a specific area of study. The courses taken in the 12-hour series must have the same course prefix for all courses being considered.

About transfer credit: Official transcripts from post-secondary institutions will be examined; credit will be awarded according to UNMC policy.

Application Checklist

1. Maintain a minimum total grade point average of 2.5 in predental hygiene courses.
2. Take the Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) through the American Dental Association (ADA). Register at: ada.org. The testing cycle is September 1 - October 31.
3. Complete the online application at: unmc.edu/dentistry. The application is available in mid-October and must be submitted by February 1. An essay is required and up to three letters of recommendation are strongly encouraged. There is a $60 application fee.
4. Criteria utilized by the UNMC Dental Hygiene Program Admissions Committee for selection includes: cumulative GPA, science GPA, ACT score, interview, familiarity with the profession, and completed application.

“UNMC feels like my second home. The faculty are very supportive; they care for every student and want us to succeed. I love that UNMC provides care for the underserved and people from all different backgrounds. It is truly a special place to be.” - Kawthar Sami, Class of 2023

To comply with prerequisites, we recommend contacting our dental hygiene program advisors. We can help you select the classes that will fulfill requirements for our curriculum, as well as your respective college. Call 402-472-1433 or email haevans@unmc.edu.

UNMC Department of Dental Hygiene
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