



CODE OF ETHICS

International Federation
of Dental Hygienists



www.ifdh.org

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Introduction

Dental hygienists are licensed oral healthcare providers who promote prevention and restore oral health. Dental hygienists provide preventive services, therapeutic remedies, and health education. Dental hygienists contribute to the public's general health and well-being. The need for dental hygiene services is universal and unrestricted by race, ethnicity, age, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. Dental hygienists are called upon to deliver care to the individual, the family, and the community.

Vision

The International Federation of Dental Hygienists (IFDH) is dedicated to enhancing the recognition of the dental hygienist as being the key provider of preventive oral health care worldwide and ensuring that oral health is integrated as a key aspect of overall health.

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to serve as a guide for the profession and the public. It is meant to instill ethical responsibility and to establish a standard for professional judgment and conduct. Further, we hope that this Code will be used to build upon and advance our profession, both individually and collectively. We also believe that this Code will assist us in making wise decisions, particularly when faced with difficult situations where we may be asked to compromise our integrity or our values. As the IFDH is a federation of many diverse countries worldwide, this Code is intended to augment each country's Code of Ethics. If a country has its own Code, that takes precedence over this document.

In all relationships, the dental hygienist must exhibit competence, loyalty, and fair return of work for compensation. Employee status does not minimize a dental hygienist's ethical responsibility to account for a patient's well-being. Nor does it lessen the dental hygienist's right to act competently, accountably, and knowledgeably on behalf of the patient. Dental Hygiene care is provided with integrity and respect and in collaboration with other health care professionals. Dental hygienists are called upon to deliver care to the individual, the family, and the community. Dental hygienists have the ability to serve in the following professional roles: clinician, corporate, public health, researcher, educator, administrator, and entrepreneur to advance the profession and oral health initiatives.

Dental hygienists value integrity, respect, excellence, and compassion.

INTEGRITY

We value moral soundness, sincerity, and freedom from corrupting influence or motive.

- a. Dental hygienists are honest, truthful, and respectful when interacting with other people.
- b. Dental hygienists practice according to the profession's highest standards and values.
- c. Dental hygienists value ethical practice, which requires both personal integrity and professional integrity.

RESPECT

We value respect for people and personal dignity, as human beings are unique in their abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needs.

- a. Dental hygienists value respect for truthfulness. Truthfulness is essential when assisting the patient to obtain relevant information about dental hygiene services, diagnosis, treatment, and probable outcomes. Truthfulness builds trust.
- b. Dental hygienists value respect for individual choice. Patients have choices and can decide which services to accept or decline.
- c. Dental hygienists value respect for patient confidentiality. Confidentiality is preserved unless such confidentiality could pose substantial risk or serious harm and where that risk or harm is greater than the harm of breaking the confidentiality.
- d. Dental hygienists respect the natural environment and endeavor to practice sustainably.



EXCELLENCE

We value acquiring and maintaining the highest level of knowledge, technical ability, and professional behavior, for the provision of the best possible care.

- a. Dental hygienists support ongoing educational activities to achieve up-to-date knowledge and practice according to the highest standards of care.
- b. Dental hygienists develop professional relationships with colleagues in oral health care and medical care to collaborate and enhance professional development.
- c. Dental hygienists refer patients to dental specialists or other healthcare providers when advanced procedures or additional care is needed.

COMPASSION

We value empathy, kindness, understanding, and respect for all by appreciating and being sensitive to the difficulties of others. Through expressions of kindness, caring, and helpfulness, we create greater trust and learning for all involved.

- a. Dental hygienists serve all individuals without discrimination.
- b. Dental hygienists recognize the importance of justice and basic human rights.
- c. Dental hygienists enlist their patients in care plans and encourage active participation in goal setting and treatment decisions.

These values are embedded in the four principal elements of the IFDH Code of Ethics

To whom the Code applies

The IFDH Code of Ethics applies to all relationships dental hygienists maintain. These include:

1. Dental hygienists and People / Society.
2. Dental hygienists and Practice.
3. Dental hygienists and Colleagues.
4. Dental hygienists and the Profession.



1. Dental Hygienists and People/Society:

The dental hygienist strives to promote an oral healthcare environment where the human rights, values, customs, and spiritual beliefs of the individual, family, and community are respected.

- The dental hygienist upholds all laws related to our profession.
- The dental hygienist documents and reports illegal, substandard, and inappropriate care.
- The dental hygienist endeavors to ensure that the individual receives sufficient and appropriate information on which to base consent for care and related dental hygiene treatment.
- The dental hygienist provides services consistent with the patient's needs and requests.
- The dental hygienist holds personal information confidential and uses professional reasoned judgment in sharing this information.
- The dental hygienist protects the environment by responsible disposal of all waste in the dental hygiene practice and is mindful to practice sustainable oral healthcare where possible.
- The dental hygienist should declare and resolve any personal interests if they are in conflict with professional obligations, to ensure the wellbeing of the patient





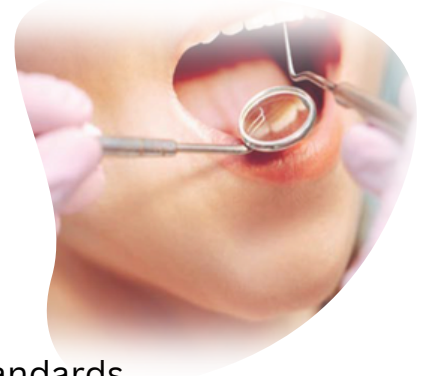
2. Dental Hygienists and Practice:

- The dental hygienist has the qualifications, knowledge, training, skills, judgment, and attitude to practice safely.
- The dental hygienist has a thorough knowledge of the profession and its related laws.
- The dental hygienist always practices with integrity and adheres to the standards of practice and personal conduct of her/his legislative jurisdiction.
- The dental hygienist is personally responsible for remaining competent and current in professional knowledge by seeking continual education and training
- The dental hygienist provides a choice of services within a range of safe, affordable options consistent with the patient's needs.
- The dental hygienist uses scientifically sound methods when providing care and educating patients.
- The dental hygienist provides timely, competent care and charges reasonable fees for professional services.
- The dental hygienist, in providing care, ensures that the use of technology and scientific advances is compatible with the safety, dignity, and rights of people.

3. Dental Hygienists and colleagues:

- The dental hygienist cultivates a co-operative and collaborative relationship with co-workers in oral health and other fields.
- The dental hygienist recognizes the unique skills and expertise of healthcare personnel working collaboratively in the patient's care.
- The dental hygienist advocates for the patient when another oral health providers giving inappropriate or incompetent care, inconsistent with the patient's well-being.





4. Dental Hygienists and the Profession:

- The dental hygienist adheres to and may exceed the standards of dental hygiene practice within the jurisdiction of the country of practice.
- The dental hygienist supports developing and publishing a core of research based on the ongoing pursuit of dental hygiene knowledge.
- The dental hygienist, acting through the professional organization, participates in creating and maintaining equitable and fair economic working conditions in healthcare.
- The dental hygienist advocates for expanded roles in the healthcare field, to include clinical, educational, research, public health, entrepreneur, corporate and administrator.

These roles occur in a variety of settings, including but not limited to dental offices, medical offices, hospitals, community health centers, long-term care facilities, schools & universities, corporations, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, publishing companies, and more.

