

## Oral Health Professionals in Maine: Definitions

<b>Dentist (DMD or DDS)</b>	Dentists graduate from a 4 year graduate (post college) dental training program that confers the degree of DMD or DDS. Dentists provide the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases of the oral tissues, especially the restoration and replacement of defective teeth. They can practice general dentistry or specialize. Dental specialists include endodontists (root canals), periodontists (gum diseases), oral and maxillofacial surgeons (surgery), pedodontists (pediatric dentistry) orthodontists (braces) and prosthodontists (restoration/replacement of teeth with artificial substitutes, such as dentures). Dentists practice is regulated by the Maine Board of Dental Examiners and must be licensed every two years.
<b>Dental Hygienist (RDH) *</b>	Hygienists graduate from a two to four year post-secondary college program and receive the title of Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) in addition to the appropriate college degree. They work under the direct or general supervision of a dentist, and in Maine may also work under <b>Public Health Supervision</b> . Hygienists can work in dental offices and public health settings, and provide a wide range of preventive services and other procedures depending on their work settings and patient needs. As a part of their training and licensure, they are also licensed as Dental Radiographers. Hygienists who practice under Public Health Supervision Status can provide preventive services in settings such as schools and nursing homes or at local community events, among others. Hygienists practice under the direction of the Maine Board of Dental Examiners and must be licensed every two years.
<b>Independent Practice Dental Hygienist (IPDH) *</b>	In April 2008, Maine passed legislation to permit licensure of Independent Practice Dental Hygienists. This licensure category is available to individuals who possess a valid license to practice dental hygiene in Maine and meet specified requirements for education and experience, and if chosen, replaces the dental hygiene license. The scope of practice for an IPDH includes many but not all of all the duties described under general supervision of RDHs practice, allowing practice without supervision by a dentist to the extent permitted by the applicable statute and rules.
<b>Dental Assistant (DA) and Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)</b>	A dental assistant works under the direct supervision of a dentist. Assistants can be trained on the job or may attend a certificate program (usually less than one year). They provide assistance to a dentist during patient treatment to help complete a variety of tasks related to operative and surgical procedures. In Maine dental assistants who take x-rays must pass a test and be licensed and registered by the State Board of Dental Examiners as Dental Radiographers; radiographers are licensed and registered every five years. With additional training or by documenting at least two years of experience, and after passing a certification examination administered by the Dental Assisting National Board, a dental assistant may become certified (CDA).
<b>Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA)*</b>	This is a new team member in Maine and means a certified dental assistant (CDA) or a licensed dental hygienist who has successfully completed a Board approved EFDA training program and who has been issued a license by the Maine Board of Dental Examiners to perform reversible procedures under the direct supervision of a dentist. These may include the placement and contouring of amalgam and composite restorative materials. Training requirements include completion of specific, Board-approved continuing education courses, or EFDA certification may be obtained by credentialing from another state or province, provided that the coursework completed is accepted by the Board of Dental Examiners.
<b>Denturist (LD)</b>	A member of the dental profession who has graduated from an accredited post-secondary denturist program. Denturists are licensed and registered by the Maine Board of Dental Examiners to practice the specialty of fabricating removable dentures - that is, dentures that do not attach to natural or restored teeth.

\*For specific information about licensure and scope of practice for these practitioners within the Maine Dental Practice Act, go to <http://www.mainedental.org/statutes.htm> where links to applicable statutes and rules may be accessed.

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