Dental Assistants perform a variety of patient care, office, and laboratory duties. They may schedule and confirm appointments, receive patients, maintain treatment records, send bills, receive payments, obtain dental records, and order dental supplies and materials. They also sterilize instruments and equipment, prepare tray setups for dental procedures, and instruct patients on postoperative and general oral health care.

Dental Assistants do not perform clinical procedures such as removal of plaque, calculus, and stains from the teeth, exposing and processing dental X-rays, applying cavity-preventive agents, such as fluorides and pit and fissure sealants, and administering antimicrobial agents. These are performed by Dental Hygienists. Refer to the Dental Hygienist Advising Sheet for more information.

Dental Assistants also work directly with the patients by ensuring they are as comfortable as possible in the dental chair and preparing them for treatment. They also work alongside the dentist as s/he examines and treats patients. They hand instruments and materials to the dentist, and keep patients' mouths dry and clear by using suction or other devices.

## Salary Information

The median wage in 2021 in California was $41,107 annually ([labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/occExplorerQSDetails.asp?searchCriteria=Dental+assistant&careerID=&menuChoice=occexplorer&geogArea=0601000000&soccode=319091&search=Explore+Occupation)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

## Recommended Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| American Dental Assistants Association | [adaausa.org/](http://www.adaausa.org/) |
| American Dental Association | [ada.org/en](https://www.ada.org/en) |
| Career Cornerstone | [careercornerstone.org/alliedhealth/dentasst/dentalasst.htm](http://www.careercornerstone.org/alliedhealth/dentasst/dentalasst.htm) |
| Explore Health Careers | [explorehealthcareers.org/](https://explorehealthcareers.org/) |

## Select Program School Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| West Los Angeles College | <http://www.wlac.edu/Dental/Dental-Assistant.aspx> |
| Oxnard College | [oxnardcollege.edu/departments/academic/dental-assisting](https://www.oxnardcollege.edu/departments/academic/dental-assisting) |
| Pasadena City College | [pasadena.edu/academics/divisions/health-sciences/dental-programs/dental-assisting/index.php](https://pasadena.edu/academics/divisions/health-sciences/dental-programs/dental-assisting/index.php) |

Note: Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up-to-date information. *Web site links are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and/or Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The Los Angeles Community College District and/or Los Angeles Pierce College bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*