

Dental nurses

Dental nurses are registered dental professionals who provide clinical and other support to registrants and patients. As a dental nurse, you can undertake the following if you are trained, competent and indemnified:

- prepare and maintain the clinical environment, including the equipment
- carry out infection prevention and control procedures to prevent physical, chemical and microbiological contamination in the surgery or laboratory
- record dental charting and oral tissue assessment carried out by other registrants
- prepare, mix and handle dental bio-materials
- provide chairside support to the operator during treatment
- keep full, accurate and contemporaneous patient records
- prepare equipment, materials and patients for dental radiography
- process dental radiographs
- monitor, support and reassure patients
- give appropriate patient advice
- support the patient and their colleagues if there is a medical emergency
- make appropriate referrals to other health professionals

Additional skills dental nurses could develop include:

- further skills in oral health education and oral health promotion
- assisting in the treatment of patients who are under conscious sedation
- further skills in assisting in the treatment of patients with special needs
- further skills in assisting in the treatment of orthodontic patients
- intra and extra-oral photography
- pouring, casting and trimming study models
- shade taking
- tracing cephalographs

Additional skills carried out on prescription from, or under the direction of, another registrant:

- taking radiographs
- placing rubber dam
- measuring and recording plaque indices
- removing sutures after the wound has been checked by a dentist
- constructing occlusal registration rims and special trays
- repairing the acrylic component of removable appliances
- applying topical anaesthetic to the prescription of a dentist
- constructing mouthguards and bleaching trays to the prescription of a dentist
- constructing vacuum formed retainers to the prescription of a dentist
- taking impressions to the prescription of a dentist or a CDT (where appropriate)

Dental nurses can apply fluoride varnish either on prescription from a dentist or direct as part of a structured dental health programme.

Dental nurses **do not** diagnose disease or treatment plan. All other skills are reserved to one or more of the other registrant groups.