



Dental hygienists clean teeth, examine patients for signs of oral diseases such as gingivitis, and provide other preventative dental care. They also educate patients on ways to improve and maintain good oral health. Dental hygienists typically do the following:

- Remove tartar, stains, and plaque from teeth
- Apply sealants and fluorides to help protect teeth
- Take and develop dental x-rays
- Keep track of patient care and treatment plans
- Teach patients oral hygiene, such as how to brush and floss correctly

Dental hygienists use many types of tools to do their job. They clean and polish teeth with both hand and powered tools, as well as ultrasonic devices. In some cases, they remove stains with an air polishing device, which sprays a combination of air, water, and baking soda. They polish teeth with a powered tool that works like an automatic toothbrush. Hygienists use x-ray machines to take pictures to check for tooth or jaw problems. Dental hygienists help patients develop and keep good oral health. For example, they may explain the relationship between diet and oral health. They also may give advice to patients on how to select toothbrushes and other oral-care devices. Other tasks hygienists may perform vary by state. Some states allow hygienists to place and carve filling materials, temporary fillings, and periodontal dressings. (*Occupational Outlook Handbook*)

The following two-year program is based on the requirements of the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s College of Dentistry. The student is urged to contact the specific school of his/her choice to determine any suggested variations of this pre-professional schedule. **Gaining acceptance into a dental hygiene program is a very competitive process. Completion of the pre-requisite courses does not automatically guarantee admission.** Since the acceptance process is competitive, students pursuing a program of study in pre-dental hygiene are encouraged to choose a major as an alternate plan so that they can be working towards a baccalaureate degree concurrently with the pre-dental hygiene program. This requires a major/minor combination or a comprehensive major as well as completion of the UNK general studies requirements and other degree requirements as set forth in the college catalog.

Take all of the following:

BIOL 103	General Biology	4
BIOL 211	Human Microbiology	4
BIOL 225	Anatomy and Physiology	4
BIOL 226	Anatomy and Physiology	4
CHEM 160	General Chemistry	4
CHEM 161	General Chemistry	4
ENG 101	Introduction to Academic Writing	3
ENG 102	Academic Writing and Research	3
PSY 203	General Psychology	3
SOC 100	Introduction to Sociology	3
SPCH 100	Fundamentals of Speech Communication	3
PE 108	Introduction to Nutrition	3

Other course requirements for admission to the University of Nebraska Medical Center Dental Hygiene Program include:

- A total of 60 credit hours with a minimum 2.5 GPA; however, a higher GPA is preferred and will be more competitive.
 - Electives must include 6 hours of Humanities/Fine Arts and 3 hours of Social Sciences.
 - Electives must also include a 12 hour series of courses in a specific area of study that interests the student. Students enrolled in the College of Dentistry at UNMC pursuing a major in Dental Hygiene must also complete a minor in order to meet graduation requirements of the College of Dentistry. The 12 hour series of courses taken while at UNK counts as one half of the minor. The second half of the minor will be in biology and will be completed while at the College of Dentistry.
- **The UNMC College of Dentistry – Dental Hygiene Program WILL NOT accept courses taken for dual credit through a college or university if completed while the student was enrolled in high school.**

Academic Guidelines

Each required course must be passed with a grade of “C” or better. A grade of “C-” will not be accepted. Students searching for electives should consider courses from the following areas: biology, chemistry, mathematics, sociology, psychology, business administration, healthcare management, and healthcare economics. See your advisor for suggestions. Students should be aware of prerequisites on all courses and plan their coursework accordingly.

Non-Academic Guidelines

There is no magic formula for acceptance in to professional school. Admission is based on GPA, test scores, shadowing and medical experiences, community involvement and volunteerism, leadership qualities, the interview, the essay, and letters of recommendation. Shadowing and medical experiences are of utmost importance. Students should plan to shadow a minimum of 40 hours in their selected profession. Health Sciences offers opportunities to meet these non-academic guidelines through the Shadowing Program, the Health Science Club, and volunteer experiences. Research experience is not required, but will be looked upon favorably. Students should plan to be involved in these types of activities and experiences throughout their undergraduate career. Other important non-academic factors include good moral character, excellent interpersonal skills, a deep commitment to healthcare, evidence of leadership potential and service to others.

Entrance Examination Required

The UNMC Dental Hygiene Program, as well as many other programs, require **the Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH)**. This Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) is a nationally administered standardized admission test for individuals applying to dental hygiene programs. For UNMC, the exam must be completed by October 31st in the year in which you are applying to their program. For more information about the exam, please visit: <https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/admission-test-for-dental-hygiene>.

The Application Process

The University of Nebraska Medical Center – College of Dentistry, Dental Hygiene Program application can be found at the program’s website. Students are urged to begin the application procedures after October 1st to be considered for the next year’s incoming fall class. The completed on-line application with paid fee and the mailed Support Documents Packet must be received by the Department of Dental Hygiene no later than February 1st. A personal interview may be requested with members of the Dental Hygiene Admissions Committee.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are optional for the University of Nebraska – College of Dentistry Dental Hygiene Program. If you choose to provide letters, please do not provide more than three.

Criminal Background Checks

Prerequisite for enrollment into any health science professional program is consent for an external background check. This check includes, but is not limited to, past criminal offenses and registry information. If there is evidence of arrest for a crime(s), conviction for a crime(s), presence on an abuse registry, or other information which reasonably suggests that patient safety might be compromised, the student will be asked to provide additional information.

Citizenship/International Students

Professional schools in the health sciences vary as to whether they accept non-U.S. citizens. Some schools that do accept non-citizens require a substantial financial commitment up front. Since not all schools accept non-citizens and since the financial commitment of those that do may be substantial, students should thoroughly research and carefully consider such a decision and discuss it with their pre-health advisors early in their undergraduate years.

Websites

University of Nebraska Medical Center Dental Hygiene Program www.unmc.edu/dentistry/dental_hygiene_program.htm

American Dental Hygiene Association

<http://www.adha.org/>

UNK Health Sciences

www.unk.edu/healthsciences

Suggested Sequence of Key Courses

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	CHEM 160 BIOL 103	CHEM 161 BIOL 211
Year 2	BIOL 225	BIOL 226

- A MATH ACT score of 22 or prior completion of College Algebra (MATH 102) is a pre-requisite for CHEM 160.
- Completion of one semester of chemistry is a pre-requisite for BIOL 225.