



South Dakota
High Demand
&
High Wage
Career

Career Cluster:
Health Care & Human Services



Dental Assistants

Standard Occupational Codes 31-9091

What They Do

Dental assistants provide patient care, take x rays, keep records and schedule appointments. They provide assistance to dentists and dental hygienists as needed. For example, they prepare patients for treatment, sterilize or disinfect instruments, set up instrument trays or assist dentist during dental procedures.

Is This For You?

Work Interests are described in the following categories (compatible with Holland's Model). People who tend to succeed in this career are:

Conventional (Organizers) —Detail oriented and organized. They like to analyze data, keep financial records and do research. They can be counted on to be accurate and enjoy structure and closure.

Realistic (Doers) — Prefer to work with objects, things, machines, tools, plants or animals. They have mechanical ability, enjoy being outdoors and working with their hands.

Work Styles (personality tendencies) of people who perform well in this occupation have:

Cooperation — A tendency to be pleasant, helpful, and willing to assist others at work.

Cautiousness — A tendency to be careful, deliberate, and risk-avoidant when making work-related decisions or doing work.

Attention to Detail — A tendency to be detail-oriented, organized, and thorough in completing work.

Abilities reflect a person's aptitude to acquire skills and knowledge. The following abilities are important for success in the career.

- Near Vision
- Oral Expression
- Oral Comprehension
- Speech Recognition
- Written Comprehension
- Deductive Reasoning
- Information Ordering
- Arm-Hand Steadiness

Work Activities

- Getting Information
- Assisting and Caring for Others
- Working with Computers
- Identifying Objects, Actions, and Events
- Inspecting Equipment, Structures, or Materials

Education & Training

Some postsecondary education in a dental assisting program is recommended for dental assistants.

A registered apprenticeship is another option for preparing for this occupation. To learn more, visit StartTodaySD.com or contact your local Job Service office to get started.

Recommended Levels* for the National Career Readiness Certificate

Applied Math	3
Workplace Documents	4
Graphic Literacy	4

*Using the median skill level.

Where They Work

The South Dakota industries which employ the largest number of dental assistants are:

- Ambulatory Health Care Services
- Federal Government
- Self Employment
- Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals

South Dakota Employment & Wages

2024 Employment	2034 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Average Annual Openings	Annual Median Wage	Annual Average Wage
1,236	1,413	177	14.3%	188	\$47,900	\$50,170

Additional References

Labor Market Information Center

www.dlr.sd.gov/lmic

Career OneStop

www.careeronestop.org

O*Net Online

www.onetonline.org

mySkills myFuture

<https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>

Provided By

Labor Market Information Center
South Dakota Dept. of Labor and Regulation
605.626.2314

Visit dlr.sd.gov/hotcareers to obtain the most recent workforce data and trends and more resources, including this document. Also available are explanations of the terms used in this occupational profile.

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