Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice

Lake Washington Institute of Technology Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice

The scope of practice for dental hygienists includes those duties and responsibilities allowed by regulation. The scope of practice for dental hygienists includes the following:

Assessment: collect and analyze data to identify patient needs and oral health problems;
  a) Medical and dental histories
  b) Vital signs
  c) Intra and extraoral examinations
  d) Periodontal and dental examinations (preliminary)
  e) Expose, develop, evaluate and interpret radiographs
  f) Indices measures
  g) Risk assessment

Planning: establish goals and treatment strategies for dental hygiene care;
  a) Dental hygiene diagnosis
  b) Dental hygiene treatment plan
  c) Informed consent

Implementation: provision of treatment as identified in the assessment and planning phase;
  a) Infection control
  b) Periodontal debridement and scaling (removal of supragingival and subgingival hard and soft deposits and stains
  c) Pain management (local anesthesia; nitrous oxide-oxygen sedation)
  d) Application of chemotherapeutic agents
  e) Fluoride therapy
  f) Application of pit and fissure sealants
  g) Coronal polishing
  h) Care of oral prostheses
  i) Care and maintenance of restorations
  j) Health education and preventive counseling
  k) Nutritional counseling

Evaluation: measurement of the extent to which goals identified in the treatment plan were achieved;
  a) Indices
  b) Reevaluation of oral and periodontal health needs
  c) Subsequent treatment needs
  d) Continuing care and Patient satisfaction

Other duties within the scope of dental hygiene practice may include:
  a) Placing temporary restorations
b) Placing and removing rubber dam
c) Placing and removing periodontal dressing
d) Removing sutures
e) Taking impressions and fabricating study casts
f) Fabricating custom sports mouth guards and bleach trays
g) Taking final impressions (expanded function in Washington)
h) Placing amalgam and composite restorations (Washington state)