

# What can a career in Dental Hygiene offer you?

**Service to Others • Future Opportunities • Variety and Responsibility**



## **What does a dental hygienist do?**

- Performs patient screening procedures
- Teaches patients how to practice good oral hygiene
- Applies preventive materials such as fluorides and sealants to the teeth
- Counsels patients regarding good nutrition and its impact on oral health
- Removes calculus and plaque (hard and soft deposits) from the teeth

## **Where do dental hygienists work?**

- Dental offices of general dentists and dental specialists
- Public health agencies, hospitals and community health clinics
- Public school systems, dental schools and dental hygiene education programs
- Dental equipment and product sales and research

## **What training is needed?**

- Most training programs take at least two years to complete with graduates receiving associate degrees
- High school classes in mathematics, chemistry, biology, and English are often recommended
- There are approximately 300 ADA accredited dental hygiene education programs in community colleges, technical colleges, dental schools and universities in the U.S.
- Other innovative training methods include electronic distance education and institutional based didactic coursework combined with community experience

## **What are future opportunities?**

- Projected to be one of the 30 fastest growing occupations
- Flexible work schedules are often available in this high demand field
- Dental hygiene offers excellent career opportunities for nontraditional students including individuals who are over 23 years of age and those seeking a career change
- Compensation depends on responsibilities, geographic location and other factors