

# Standards of Practice



## COMMUNICATION

### STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist communicates professionally, respectfully, effectively, and in a timely manner.

### PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Communicate in a respectful, open, and clear manner and provide truthful, accurate, and complete information in all professional interactions (e.g., spoken, written, **electronic communication**). This includes but is not limited to communication with or regarding:
  - a) Patients;
  - b) Individuals within the profession;
  - c) Other health professionals;
  - d) Colleagues;
  - e) The dental hygiene profession; and/or
  - f) The College.
2. Communicate effectively with the patient to promote the patient's **health literacy** and understanding of proposed **dental hygiene services** (e.g., active listening, use of plain language).
3. Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their communication approaches.
4. Adapt communication to the needs of the patient and minimize barriers by incorporating relevant supports (e.g., interpreters, visual aids, technology, culturally appropriate resources).
5. Address the patient's questions in a timely manner and within the scope of dental hygiene practice.

### PATIENT EXPECTATION

The patient can expect the dental hygienist to communicate with them clearly, professionally, and effectively in a way that supports their understanding and participation.

## GLOSSARY

**DENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES:** Any service that falls within the practice of the profession of dental hygienists as outlined in the [Health Professions Act](#) (Schedule 5, section 3).

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:** Any form of electronic media used to transmit information (e.g., texting, social media, email, patient communication software).

**HEALTH LITERACY:** The ability to obtain, process, understand, and respond to health messages, and be motivated to make health decisions that promote and maintain good health.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boyd, L. D., Mallonee, L. F., Wyche, C. J. & Halaris J. F. (2021). Wilkins' Clinical Practice of the Dental Hygienist (13<sup>th</sup> ed). Jones & Bartlett Learning.