

# What can a career in Dentistry offer you?



**Service to Others • Balanced Lifestyle • Self-Employment • Earning Potential  
Status & Prestige • Variety of Career Options**

## What's unique about dentistry?

- One of the ten most trusted and ethical professions in the U.S.
- Flexibility to balance a professional and personal life
- Opportunity to be your own boss and own a dental practice
- Personally rewarding profession
- Combines art and science

## What does a dentist do?

- Diagnose and treat diseases, injuries and malformations of the teeth and mouth
- Improve a patient's appearance
- Perform surgical procedures such as implants, tissue grafts and extractions
- Educate patients on how to better care for their teeth and prevent oral disease
- Teach future dentists and dental hygienists
- Perform research directed to improving oral health and developing new treatment methods

## What career options are available in dentistry?

- Over 80% are general practitioners while about 20% are dental specialists who limit their practices to one of the nine recognized dental specialty areas
- Teaching, dental research and dental industry comprise additional rewarding career options for both general practitioners and dental specialists
- Dentists also work in public health agencies, hospitals, the military and other settings

## How can I prepare for a career in dentistry?

- Get a broad exposure to science and math while in high school—enroll in college preparatory classes in biology, algebra and chemistry
- Continue taking natural science courses in college such as general biology, organic and inorganic chemistry and physics
- Ask to volunteer or job shadow at your family dentist's office, orthodontist's office and pediatric dentist's office
- A college undergraduate degree is recommended as preparation for dental school

- Talk with admission officers about financial aid resources and dental school requirements (See list of ADA accredited dental schools in the U.S. on ADA.org)
- Take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) a year before entering dental school

## What are the future opportunities for dentistry?

- Outlook is favorable for new dentists and exceptional career opportunities exist for minority students
- Large numbers of dentists are projected to retire in the next 20 years and new dentists will be needed in private practice, as teachers/researchers and in public health dentistry
- Increasing numbers of older adults are keeping their teeth longer, greater awareness of oral health care, and a high demand for cosmetic services
- Advancements in dental technology such as digital radiography, laser systems and informatics will allow dentists to provide more effective treatments and practice more efficiently
- New information about the relationship of oral health to general health makes dentistry an important health profession for the future

## How much does a dentist earn?

- In 2005, the average earnings for a general practitioner who owns his/her practice was over \$198,000; the average earnings for a dental specialist was over \$304,000
- Average income of a dentist—highest 5% of U.S. family income

## For additional information about careers in dentistry

American Dental Association (ADA)  
312.440.2390, [www.ada.org/goto/careers](http://www.ada.org/goto/careers)

American Dental Education Association (ADEA)  
202.289.7201, [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)

American Student Dental Association (ASDA)  
312.440.2795, [www.asdanet.org](http://www.asdanet.org)