

**Dental Assistants** perform a variety of patient care, office, and laboratory duties. They work at chair-side as dentists examine and treat patients. They make patients as comfortable as possible in the dental chair, prepare them for treatment, and obtain dental records. Assistants hand instruments and materials to dentists, and keep patients' mouths dry and clear by using suction or other devices. Assistants also sterilize and disinfect instruments and equipment, prepare tray setups for dental procedures, and instruct patients on oral health care.

Some dental assistants prepare materials for making impressions and restorations, expose radiographs, and process dental x-ray film as directed by a dentist. They may also remove sutures, apply anesthetics and cavity preventive agents to teeth and gums, remove excess cement used in the filling process, and place rubber dams on the teeth to isolate them for individual treatment. Those with laboratory duties make casts of the teeth and mouth from impressions taken by dentists, clean and polish removable appliances, and make temporary crowns. Dental assistants with office duties schedule and confirm appointments, receive patients, keep treatment records, send bills, receive payments, and order supplies/materials.

**Functions that licensed NYS Certified Dental Assistants can perform under NYS Education Law, section 6608:**

- provide patient education
- take preliminary medical histories and vital signs to be reviewed by the dentist
- place and remove rubber dams; matrix bands
- select and pre-fit provisional crowns and orthodontic bands
- remove orthodontic arch wires and ligature ties
- take impressions for study casts or diagnostic casts
- remove periodontal dressing and remove suture materials and such other dental supportive services authorized in regulations promulgated by the commissioner

**Salary Information:**

- Dental Assisting, Certificate  
\$34,560 Median Salary (Follow-up Study, Monroe Community College Graduates, 2008)
- Dental Assistant  
\$33,170 Median Salary (Finger Lakes Region, NYS Department of Labor, 2008)
- ***Dental Assistants for the Rochester, New York area:***  
\$30,500 Median Salary (Career One Stop, 2008)

[\*Salary varies based on education/advanced degree, work-experience & setting/location]

**Additional Information:**

- NYS Dental Assistant License Requirements: [www.op.nysed.gov](http://www.op.nysed.gov)
- Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.: [www.dentalassisting.com](http://www.dentalassisting.com)

