**Oral Communication**

Dental Hygienists

* make telephone calls to schedule patients' appointments.
* request that office staff perform duties such as making telephone calls, placing supply orders or scheduling school visits.
* interact with co-workers and colleagues to coordinate job tasks, discuss common work problems and exchange information about dental hygiene and opinions about professional matters.
* interact with suppliers to explain unusual orders and to learn about the features, costs and benefits of new products such as tooth whitening material.
* discuss children's dental health with parents. They explain examination results in simple, appropriate language, outline treatment procedures and provide advice about dental hygiene. If hygienists fail to communicate effectively, parents may not understand treatment and continuing care information and children's dental health will suffer.
* may share information about patients with their dentists. They discuss clinical findings, treatment plans and problems noted during examinations. Clear communication is important to prevent patients from suffering discomfort and possible adverse reactions.
* may facilitate group discussions and make presentations to school children, teachers, parents, co-workers and colleagues about dental health topics such as proper dental hygiene and summaries of dental hygiene research studies. Dental hygienists may select visual aids such as dental posters and teeth models and prepare presentation outlines, speaking notes and PowerPoint slides to promote interest and aid understanding
* speak with patients of all ages and various nationalities to understand their needs, provide dental health instruction, explain treatments and procedures, answer their questions and reassure them. They talk about the importance of regular dental flossing, deal with children's emotional outbursts and explain complex dental procedures in understandable terms. They adapt their communication styles and language to best meet the needs of patients
* may present results of scientific studies such as the effects of antiseptic mouth rinses on oral health. They may interpret and summarize study results and prepare recommendations so that their peers can apply the findings to their dental hygiene practices. Presentations must be prepared to answer challenging questions and justify their analyses and recommendations. Hygienists who do not communicate effectively with their peers lose credibility.