

A Glimpse at Dental Hygiene Services

Dental hygiene services are centered on the promotion of wellness. In addition to examining patients for the signs and symptoms of serious diseases, dental hygienists provide direct patient services and educate them to follow preventive measures at home. Their services include procedures to prevent periodontal infection and tooth decay.

The focus of dental hygiene services is the oral prophylaxis, sometimes referred to as teeth cleaning. This involves scaling the removal of hard calculus deposits above (supragingival) and below (subgingival) the gum line. These deposits aid the development of the bacterial colonies that cause periodontal (gum) disease, and can cause loose teeth and root decay.

It is important to note that supragingival scaling and coronal polishing do not constitute an oral prophylaxis. Since periodontal disease begins below the gum line, scaling must also be done below the gum line. It is negligent for a dental hygienist or dentist to provide a simple polishing and represent it as a thorough oral prophylaxis. Indeed, when performed by untrained personnel, polishing procedures can cause harmful changes in the teeth; remove the outer layer of enamel containing protective fluoride; and damage the tooth structure underneath.

Other dental hygiene services include application of pit and fissure sealants and the application of topical fluorides, both of which protect the surfaces of teeth from decay

