

Japan Dental Hygienists Association

Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists

Preamble

Oral health plays a fundamental and important role in maintaining a healthy and high quality life. The mission of dental hygienists is to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of oral health by preventing dental diseases and improving oral hygiene.

Dental hygienists are licensed professionals who are authorized to practice dental hygiene and, by providing people lifelong preventive dental health services and oral health care through oral hygiene and management of oral functions, will support people to live their whole life with dignity.

Dental hygienists must perform their work based on respect to human rights, such as the right to live, the right to preserve dignity and the right to receive equal oral health care, as well as trusting relationships.

This Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists is a code of conduct for dental hygienists to follow when practicing dental hygiene at hospitals, clinics, nursing care and welfare facilities, local communities, offices, companies, educational institutions, research institutes, administrative agencies or in any other place, and at the same time specifies to the society, a clear manifestation of the basic roles and responsibilities of dental hygienists.

Ethical Principles

1. Dental hygienists respect human life, human character and human rights.
2. Dental hygienists perform their duties with equality, fairness and good faith.
3. Dental hygienists perform their duties by providing sufficient information and establishing trusting relationships.
4. Dental hygienists respect and uphold people's right to know and right of self-determination.
5. Dental hygienists are obliged to maintain confidentiality and strive to protect personal information.
6. Dental hygienists protect and ensure the safety of subject individuals when their oral

- health is endangered or their safety is at risk.
7. Dental hygienists adhere to the Dental Hygienist Act and related laws and regulations, and ensure the quality and autonomy of their service.
 8. Dental hygienists are personally responsible for maintaining, enhancing and developing professional competence through continuous learning.
 9. Dental hygienists work collaboratively with other health and welfare professionals to ensure appropriate oral health management.
 10. Dental hygienists establish and enforce appropriate standards to improve quality of service.
 11. Dental hygienists contribute to the further development of dental hygiene through practice and research.
 12. Dental hygienists respect the right of individuals to be treated fairly, as well as their right to privacy.
 13. Dental hygienists strive to maintain a healthy work environment in order to provide quality care.
 14. Dental hygienists uphold high personal standards in order to gain the trust of society and its people.
 15. Dental hygienists share responsibility with society for health-related environmental issues.
 16. Dental hygienists contribute to improving society by working with professional organizations to promote systems and measures to maintain and enhance oral health.

Principles and Responsibilities

1. Dental hygienists respect human life, human character and human rights.

The basic role of dental hygienists is to support oral health care necessary for the maintenance and promotion of oral health, and to strive to preserve and promote general health and to ensure the quality of life. Hence, under any given circumstance, dental hygienists first and foremost act to protect human life, human character, human rights and human dignity.

2. Dental hygienists perform their duties with equality, fairness and good faith.

All people have a right to receive fair and reasonable support of oral health care. Dental hygienists perform dental hygiene service to provide oral health care with equality, fairness and good faith, without discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, creed, gender or sexual behavior, age, lifestyle and social or economic status.

3. **Dental hygienists perform their duties by providing sufficient information and establishing trusting relationships.**

Dental hygienists perform their duties based on trusting relationships between dental hygienists and subject individuals. Dental hygienists are responsible to build and develop trust by providing such individuals with thorough information to obtain understanding and consent to their practice and by accepting responsibility for the results of their actions. Also, in the process of providing oral health care, dental hygienists should encourage the subject individuals to participate actively in the process so that their intentions are reflected in the procedure.

4. **Dental hygienists respect and uphold people's right to know and right of self-determination.**

People have the right to be fully informed of their oral health condition, and make choices regarding support to their oral health care. Hence, dental hygienists strive to provide sufficient information and guarantee opportunities of self-determinations to subject individuals. Dental hygienists respond in good faith to requests for disclosure of medical records and business records in accordance with guidelines of facilities etc.

5. **Dental hygienists are obligated to maintain confidentiality and strive to protect personal information.**

In order to provide appropriate oral health care from a professional standpoint, dental hygienists are often in a position to obtain personal information of subject individuals regarding their oral condition or lifestyle, or physical, mental and social information. When obtaining personal information, it is important to explain what the information will be used for and to maintain its confidentiality. Dental hygienists exercise utmost care when handling personal information, such as medical records and business records, and take precautions against the leakage of information. When information needs to be shared with other healthcare/welfare personnel for the purpose of cooperation between personnel of different occupations, disclosure of such information will be made based on appropriate discretions.

6. **Dental hygienists protect and ensure the safety of subject individuals when their oral health is endangered or their safety is at risk.**

Dental hygienists endeavor to ensure that subject individuals receive appropriate oral health care at all times. However, when oral health care is endangered by other parties,

or concerns arise over inappropriate decisions or actions, dental hygienists take measures to protect the individual, work to ensure their safety, and resolve the problem through appropriate means. Even if such dental hygienist is not in a management or leadership position within the workplace, he/she should make such concern known to others and work toward a solution.

Dental hygienists will pay attention to any and all risk in any situation surrounding oral health care, including the possibility that their own conduct may harm the subject individuals, and strive to prevent danger.

7. Dental hygienists adhere to the Dental Hygienist Act and related laws and regulations, and ensure the quality and autonomy of their service.

Dental hygienists should always be properly aware of their responsibilities and abilities when performing dental hygiene services necessary for oral health care, and demonstrate accountability for their actions and results thereof. The scope of their responsibility is stipulated in the Dental Hygienist Act and related laws and regulations, and dental hygienists must not take on tasks that exceed their legal responsibilities. When asked to take on tasks beyond their ability, in order to ensure the quality and autonomy of dental hygiene services to be provided, dental hygienists should volunteer to receive guidance and support to improve their practical skills, or in some cases request change in their assignment. Dental hygienists must adhere to the Dental Hygienist Act and related laws and regulations and carry out all duties accordingly.

8. Dental hygienists are personally responsible for maintaining, enhancing and developing professional competence through continuous learning.

In order to improve practical clinical skills in response to the diversifying needs of oral health care due to advances in dental science and treatment and changes in social values, dental hygienists strive to maintain, improve and develop their professional skills independently through continuous learning. Aside from on-the-job training, dental hygienists should actively take advantage of opportunities available for continuous learning as professionals through continuing education programs, academic societies and various training programs conducted by the Dental Hygienists Association.

9. Dental hygienists work collaboratively with other health and welfare professionals to ensure appropriate oral health management.

Dental hygienists will cooperate and collaborate with other dental healthcare professionals and healthcare/welfare personnel etc., and based on mutual

understanding with such personnel, strive to provide higher quality oral health care. When cooperating and collaborating with such personnel, dental hygienists build close cooperative relationships based on mutual understanding as professionals, share objectives and information and use their best efforts to ensure provision of appropriate oral health management to subject individuals.

10. Dental hygienists establish and enforce appropriate standards to improve quality of service.

Dental hygienists establish and implement appropriate standards of practice, management, education and research in order to improve the quality of dental hygiene services.

Standards for dental hygiene services stipulate, in regard to standards of practice, contents and methods of practice. Standards of management stipulate environment improvement within the facilities, such as human resource development programs, business management, safety management, information management, and equipment management required to realize the practice. Educational standards stipulate educational contents, environment and resources. Research standards stipulate research contents and examination of their priority, as well as appropriate procedures for presenting research methods and research results.

Such standards should be established systematically, and individuals and organizations should make efforts to meet these standards and use them as evaluation criteria. These standards should also be revised periodically to meet the changing needs of society.

11. Dental hygienists contribute to the further development of dental hygiene through practice and research.

Dental hygienists always strive to make use of the latest knowledge gained through provision of service and research in order to provide higher quality work, as well as to accumulate new knowledge and technological advancements to contribute to the overall development of the dental hygiene profession. In addition, every effort should be made to ensure that the use of newly developed technologies ensures the safety, maintains the dignity or guarantees the rights of people.

12. Dental hygienists respect the right of individuals to be treated fairly, as well as their right to privacy.

Dental hygienists strive to respect and guarantee the rights of subject individuals not to suffer disadvantage, to have access to full disclosure, to make their own decision, and to

maintain their privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, with regard to provision of service and research. If a conflict of interest arises between their own interest and their duty as a dental hygienist, dental hygienists must respect and protect the rights and welfare of subject individuals.

13. Dental hygienists strive to maintain a healthy work environment in order to provide quality care.

Dental hygienists support oral health management of people and provide services based on their own physical and mental health. Hence, dental hygienists should be mindful of their own health by maintaining a good balance between their work and private lives, as well as work and rest. Healthy work environment and suitable work conditions should be created so that dental hygienists may engage in their work receiving treatment and compensation appropriate to their responsibility. Also, systematic efforts necessary to secure safety and conduct risk managements to realize a healthy working life such as to secure medical safety, disease prevention and protection from radiation exposure, making workplace free of violence and harassment, should be made.

14. Dental hygienists uphold high personal standards in order to gain the trust of society and its people.

Dental hygienists cannot fulfill their roles without the trust of society and its people. Trust is fostered not only through professional knowledge and skills, but through honesty, civility, noble character, cleanliness and humility, as well as actions based on deep knowledge and common sense.

Dental hygienists must always be aware of their mission and responsibility as a professional and strive to behave honorably as an individual.

15. Dental hygienists share responsibility with society for health-related environmental issues.

Dental hygienists are required to defend the rights of individuals to enjoy healthy and cultured living. Therefore, it is vital for dental hygienists to establish an environment that promotes health and to work closely with society to jointly address problems relating to the destruction of natural environment and social environment. Dental hygienists should also fulfill their responsibility to prevent environmental destruction caused by health and welfare activities, for instance, ensuring the proper disposal and disposal process of medical waste, and to strive to safeguard the environment in order to maintain and enhance the health of people.

16. Dental hygienists contribute to improving society by working with professional organizations to promote systems and measures to maintain and enhance oral health.

Dental hygienists shall, at all times, endeavor to establish a legal system that addresses the changes in society and the needs of individuals and to promote measures relating to health and welfare to ensure that people can obtain the highest quality of oral health care. In order to do so, dental hygienists shall act through the activities of the Dental Hygienists Association, the professional organization for dental hygienists, and contribute to a better society.

This "Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists" of the Japan Dental Hygienists Association was approved and adopted at the regular meeting of the Board of Representatives held on June 16, 2019.