

# Can Men be Dental

## Assistants?

**YES!**



Dental assistants perform a variety of tasks, depending on the dental office they work in. They work closely with dentists as they examine and treat patients. They make patients as comfortable as possible in the dental chair. They obtain dental records and prepare patients for their exam. Dental assistants hand instruments and materials to dentists during procedures.

Some dental assistants have other duties that require more training. They take x-rays of patients' teeth and process the film. They remove stitches or apply numbing agents to patients' gums. In addition, they apply fluoride to patients' teeth to prevent cavities.

**Idaho Wages**  
**Hourly Range \$10.95 to \$17.58**  
**Median Wage \$13.43**

(Source: Idaho Wage & Employment Report, 2008)

### Preparation

To work as a Dental Assistant, you must:

- have a high school diploma or GED;
- have good interpersonal skills;
- be able to work as part of a team; and
- complete on-the-job training or a one-year training program.

**A Technical Certificate is offered at the College of Southern Idaho**

### Idaho Employment

1732 jobs— Very Large occupation  
49.8% annual growth  
135 —very high annual jobs open

Nationally, men make up 4.6% of the labor force.  
Source: US Dept of Labor (2006)

### Job Outlook

The increasing trend for people to keep their natural teeth will fuel the demand for dental services. Older dentists, who are less likely to employ assistants, will be replaced by recent graduates, who are more likely to hire them. In addition, as dentists' workloads increase, they are expected to hire more assistants to perform routine tasks. Job prospects for dental assistants should be good.

### Regardless of Gender Dental Assistants need to:

- Assist dentists at chair-side as they examine and treat patients.
- Sterilize and disinfect instruments and equipment. Prepare equipment trays for dentist.
- Prepare patient for exams and procedures.
- Take dental x-rays and process x-ray film.
- Record treatment information in patients' charts.
- Hand instruments and materials to dentists. Clear patients' mouths using suction or other devices.
- Make casts of teeth and mouth or temporary crowns from impressions of patients' teeth.
- Instruct patients on postoperative and general oral health care.
- Make models of patients' teeth.
- Apply fluoride to patients' teeth.
- Schedule and confirm appointments with patients.
- Send bills, receive payments, and order dental supplies and materials.
- Clean and polish removable dental appliances, such as bridges.

### Dental assistants frequently:

- Use hands to handle, control, or feel objects, tools, or controls.
- Repeat the same motions.
- Bend or twist the body when operating equipment or examining patients.
- Sit for long periods of time.

**College of Southern Idaho**  
**Center for New Directions**  
**Non Traditional Occupations Program—732-6688.**  
**Dental Assistant Program**  
**Contact Tonja Bowcut—732-6708**