



Dentist

Work Activities/Work Location:

- Dentists diagnose, prevent and treat problems of the teeth, gums and tissues of the mouth.
- They examine patients to determine conditions and diseases using x-rays and a variety of dental instruments.
- They clean, fill, extract and replace teeth and provide preventive dental services such as instruction on proper diet, brushing and flossing as well as placing protective plastic sealants on teeth, straightening teeth, and performing corrective surgery on the gums and supportive bones to treat gum disease.
- Most dentists are in private practice and usually work with a dental hygienist, dental assistant, or nurse.
- Dentists also may be a part of a dental or medical group, or they may work in a hospital, public health department, or the military.

Advantages & Disadvantages

- There is an EXTREME shortage of dentists in Wisconsin. Soon there will be entire counties without a dentist.
- Dentists like helping people. Pediatric dentists love to work with and treat children. Dentists enjoy educating their patients to properly care for their teeth and gums.
- They also enjoy prestige in the community and higher incomes.

Method of Entry:

- Most dentists first graduate from a four-year bachelor's degree program.
- Many bachelor's degree programs are acceptable preparation for admissions into dental school as long as prerequisite courses are met.
- However, the majority of people admitted into dental school have an undergraduate degree in pre-dentistry studies or one of the life sciences.
- Applicants exceed the number of students admitted into dental school, as it is VERY competitive.
- Admission into Dental School is multi-stepped and is based on college grades, scores on the Dental Admissions Test (DAT), faculty recommendations regarding the applicant's personality and aptitude, extracurricular activities, and a personal interview.

- At Marquette University School of Dentistry the minimum entrance requirement is 90 semester credits of liberal arts study including 16 hours of chemistry—2 courses (8 semester hours) of inorganic including lab and 2 courses (8 semester hours) of organic including lab, 8 hours of biology—zoology and comparative vertebrate anatomy preferred, 8 hours of physics including laboratory work. Also 6 hours of English, and 52 hours of elective courses (recommended are anatomy, cell biology, genetics, biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, and mathematics)
- Students must graduate from an accredited dental school and pass state certification examinations before they are licensed to practice in their field of dental specialization.

Helpful High School Courses & Experiences:

- Students should take a college preparatory curriculum.
- Helpful high school courses would include anatomy & physiology, algebra, chemistry, biology, physics, foreign language (minimum of two years), and statistics and probability.

Education & Training:

- Some Dental Schools only require a minimum of 2 years of college level pre-dental education. However, most (99%) dental students have at least a bachelor's degree for acceptance into dental school.
- Dental schools last from 3 to 4 years academic years with coursework in clinical sciences, anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology.
- In the last 2 years students concentrate on clinical experience---treating patients usually in a dental clinic under the supervision of a licensed dentist, along with their usual coursework.
- Upon completion of an accredited dental school program students receive the degree Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or an equivalent degree, or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD).
- Some dental school graduates work for established dentists as associates for a year or two in order to gain experience and save money to equip an office of their own.
- Most dental school graduates, however, purchase an established practice or open a new one immediately after graduation.

Advancement Opportunities

- Dentist can devote another two of five more years of postgraduate study to their field of specialization.
- Dentists who want to teach or conduct research usually spend an additional 2 to 5 years in advanced training in programs operated by dental schools.

Salary:

- Typical Salary Range (Wisconsin): \$32,578 to more than \$145,600 per year.
- Typical Salary Range (National): \$55,926 to more than \$145,600 per year.

Hours:

- Dentists usually work 32 hours a week, Monday thru Friday.
- They may be on call for emergencies.

Employment Information (Wisconsin):

- Number Employed in 2000: 4,280
- Expected Employment in 2010: 4,350
- Percent Employment Growth (2000-2010): 2%
- There is an extreme shortage of dentists in Wisconsin.

Educational Institutions:

- Marquette University

Professional Organizations & Additional Information:

- See Wisconsin Health Careers Website: www.wihealthcareers.org