Dentists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia
1. Working as a Dentist [NOC 3113]

Job Description

Working as a Dentist you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Examine patients' teeth, gums, and surrounding tissue to diagnose disease, injury, and decay, and plan appropriate treatment
- Restore, extract, and replace diseased and decayed teeth
- Perform oral surgery, periodontal surgery, and other treatments
- Give advice on oral hygiene
- Supervise dental hygienists, dental assistants, and other staff
- Dentists may specialize


Industry Overview

Employment prospects for dentists are good with a significant number of new openings through to 2022. There are currently not enough new graduates to meet employment demand. In particular, there is currently a shortage of dentists in rural areas of the province of BC.

Population growth, an ageing population, and technological advancement in diagnosis and treatment, are increasing the demand for dental services.

**Job Outlook in BC**

**Dentists**

![Chart from WorkBC](image)

BC’s Regional Employment Projections, 2010-2015, provides job openings projections for Dentists within BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2010 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>2015 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>Avg Annual % Change, 5 Years, 2010 to 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island / Coast</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland / Southwest</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td>2,840</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson-Okanagan</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast &amp; Nechako</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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You can learn more about dentists in BC from:

- **WorkBC Career Exploration, Dentists**: [http://workbc.ca/Careers](http://workbc.ca/Careers) ([search Dentist or NOC 3113](http://workbc.ca/Careers))

- **Career Cruising database** (Profile for Dentist).

### Types of Employers

Most dentists work in private practice, but you may also be employed in hospitals, clinics, public health facilities, or universities.

### Salary

The provincial average salary for BC dentists is between $95,000 and $125,000.

You are paid directly by patients or by patient insurance companies. A dentist with an established practice can generate a great deal of money, but half or more of that money could go to pay for equipment, insurance, staff salaries, and other overhead costs such as office space. After these costs are taken into account, a dentist in general practice can earn anywhere from about $60,000 to upwards of $200,000 a year.

The highest wages are generally earned by specialists, such as orthodontists and periodontists. At busy practices in large urban areas, these specialized dentists can make more than $300,000 a year.

Salaried dentists usually receive benefits, such as health insurance, paid sick days, and retirement benefits. Self-employed dentists must provide their own benefits.

Sources:
- WorkBC & Career Cruising
Job Bank Canada provides hourly wages for Dentists in BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>24,155</td>
<td>84,991</td>
<td>179,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</td>
<td>24,192</td>
<td>75,250</td>
<td>164,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</td>
<td>20,786</td>
<td>100,221</td>
<td>180,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Job Bank Canada [http://www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)

**Working Hours**

Most dentists work 7 or 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. Less experienced dentists who are trying to build up their practices often work longer hours.

Dentists in private practice often have the flexibility to choose when and how many hours (full-time or part-time) they want to work. In some instances, you may be required to adjust hours to meet patients' needs. Early evening and weekend work is becoming more common.

Source: *Career Cruising* database
2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong interpersonal and communication skills as well as patience
- good hand-eye coordination
- aptitude for using mechanical equipment
- high degree of manual dexterity
- able to calm people who are scared or in pain
- in control and focused, even when tired

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising database (Profile for Dentist).

Education and Experience

Dentists require:

- One to four years of pre-dentistry university studies, and
- University degree from a recognized dental program
- Licensing by a provincial or territorial regulatory body
- Advanced training for specialized practice
- Licensing for specializations.

A degree in dentistry is required. A Doctor of Dental Medicine degree is most common; however, a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree or Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree is sufficient to work in this occupation.

The Faculty of Dentistry at the University of British Columbia offers the province's only program that leads to a Doctor of Dental Medicine degree (DMD).

Further education beyond a dental medicine degree or dental surgery degree is required in order to become a dental specialist.
Qualifications

This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.

Licensing Requirements for Dentists

To practise dentistry in BC, you must:

- complete an accredited general practitioners dentistry degree
- be registered and licensed with the College of Dental Surgeons of BC
- pass the National Dental Examination Board of Canada exam
  [http://www.ndeb.ca](http://www.ndeb.ca)

To maintain a licence to practise in BC, the College of Dental Surgeons of BC (CDSBC) requires evidence of continuing education on a regular basis.

For more information on licensing and registration as a dentist, see the College of Dental Surgeons of BC website: [https://staging.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal](https://staging.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal)

Internationally educated dentists:

Regardless of education, licensure, or experience, you must be registered and licensed with the College of Dental Surgeons of BC to practise.

For more information see:

- the College of Dental Surgeons of BC
  [https://www.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal/dentists/dentists-coming-from-another-country](https://www.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal/dentists/dentists-coming-from-another-country)
- National dental Examination Board of Canada
  [http://www.ndeb.ca/nonaccredited](http://www.ndeb.ca/nonaccredited)

Additional information for foreign-trained dentists is provided on the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials website:

3. Finding Jobs

You may find job advertisements in trade journals, electronic sources, local newspapers, as well through professional associations’ publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the Vancouver Sun and The Province at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the Vancouver Sun on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in The Province on Sundays.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/jobfreewaycom
  Access at VPL locations only

- (See categories 2280-2479, “Health/Medical Professionals”, and Categories 6840-7079, “Health Services”)

Online Job Postings

- Fraser Health Authority
  Fraser Health operates 12 acute care hospitals and offers community programs in communities stretching from Burnaby to White Rock to Hope.

- Indeed
  http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

- University of British Columbia Faculty of Dentistry, Professional Posting Services for Alumni
  http://www.dentistry.ubc.ca/professional-posting-services-for-alumni/

- University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry, Practice Opportunities
  http://www.dentistry.utoronto.ca/practice-opportunities
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- **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**
  
  
  Operates hospitals and community-based residential, home health, mental health, and public health service in Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, and Richmond

- **Provincial Health Services Authority**
  
  
  Operates nine agencies that provide province-wide health care services

**Professional Associations’ Career Resources**

- **British Columbia Dental Association**
  

- **Canadian Dental Association**
  

**Identifying the Right Position**

When you browse job advertisements, you’ll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For dentists, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- dental surgeon
- endodontist
- oral pathologist
- oral radiologist
- orthodontist
- pediatric dentist
- public health dentist

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of dental offices and other agencies within the dental sector in BC and Canada. Contact them directly to see if there are job opportunities:

- **Canadian Dental Directory**
  Includes dental offices by specialization, dental labs, universities, and other services in the dental sector.
  Available at the Central Library, 617.60025 C21

- **Directory of Dentists**
  Contact information for dentists and specialists in British Columbia.
  Available at the Central Library, 617.606 C69d
  And online at [https://eservice.cdsbc.org/directory/](https://eservice.cdsbc.org/directory/)

- **Reference Canada**
  Click on “Start Search” beside Canadian Businesses, then select the “Advanced Search” button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter “dentists” or “dental” and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.
  Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

**NOTE:** You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).
4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, [http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/](http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/) to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/).

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
  Go to [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca)
  [Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for dentists in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry**
  
  http://acfd.ca/

  This association oversees all accredited dental programs across Canada and provides general information about practising dentistry in Canada and links to related organizations.

- **BC Dental Association**
  
  http://www.bcdental.org

  This provincial chapter of the Canadian Dental Association is the professional association for dentists in BC, and is responsible for promoting and supporting the interests of its members.

- **College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia**
  
  http://www.cdsbc.org/

  The organizations that registers, licenses, and regulates dentists and certified dental assistants (CDAs) in BC.

- **National Dental Examining Board of Canada**
  
  http://www.ndeb.ca/

  This organization administers certification exams to graduating dentists.

- **Royal College of Dentists of Canada**
  
  http://www.rcdc.ca/en?CFID=10800895&CFTOKEN=489f240fce03f2c6-905527A7-BA83-6C25-EADAE3F1B1A1D10B

  The organization that administers examinations for each dental speciality; go to the FAQ and Examinations section to find out more.
Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library:

- JCDA : Journal of the Canadian Dental Association
  Available at VPL Central 617.6005 C21
  Also available online at http://www.jcda.ca/

- Newsletters of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia
  Available online at https://www.cdsbc.org/practice-resources/newsletters

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/.