

Becoming A Dentist

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Becoming a dentist is a highly-regarded profession that involves the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of oral diseases and disorders. To achieve this career goal, there are several necessary steps to follow, according to the American Dental Association (ADA).

EDUCATION

The first step is completing an undergraduate degree, which should include courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics, as well as shadowing or volunteering in a dental office to gain practical experience. The ADA recommends joining pre-dental organizations and attending dental conferences to learn more about the profession.

The second step is taking the Dental Admission Test (DAT), which measures academic ability and scientific knowledge. The test is comprised of four sections: natural sciences, perceptual ability, reading comprehension and quantitative reasoning. The ADA recommends preparing for the DAT by studying the relevant material and taking practice tests.



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After completing the DAT, the next step is applying to dental school.

Dental schools typically require transcripts, letters of recommendation, and a personal statement. The application process varies depending on the school, but it is recommended to apply to several schools to increase the chances of acceptance.

Dental schools usually take four years to complete, with the first two years focused on classroom and laboratory work, while the last two years focus on clinical work under the supervision of licensed dentists.

LICENSURE

Once graduated from dental school, dentists must obtain licensure to practice dentistry in their region. Licensure requirements vary depending on the state or country, but usually include passing a written and clinical exam. Dentists may also be required to complete a residency program to gain additional training in a specialized area of dentistry, according to the ADA.

SPECIALIZATION

Dentists who want to specialize in a specific area of dentistry can complete a post-graduate residency program.

Specializations include orthodontics, periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, and pediatric dentistry. Each specialization requires additional training and a board certification exam, according to the ADA.

ONGOING TRAINING

As with any healthcare profession, continuing education is essential for dentists. They must keep up with the latest advancements in dental technology, materials, and procedures to provide the best care for their patients.

Continuing education can

include attending dental conferences, taking online courses, and reading professional journals.

In conclusion, becoming a dentist requires a significant amount of education and training.

However, the profession is rewarding and fulfilling. Dentists have the opportunity to help people maintain their oral health and improve their quality of life. By following the necessary steps outlined by the ADA, aspiring dentists can achieve their goal of becoming a dentist and make a difference in people's lives every day.