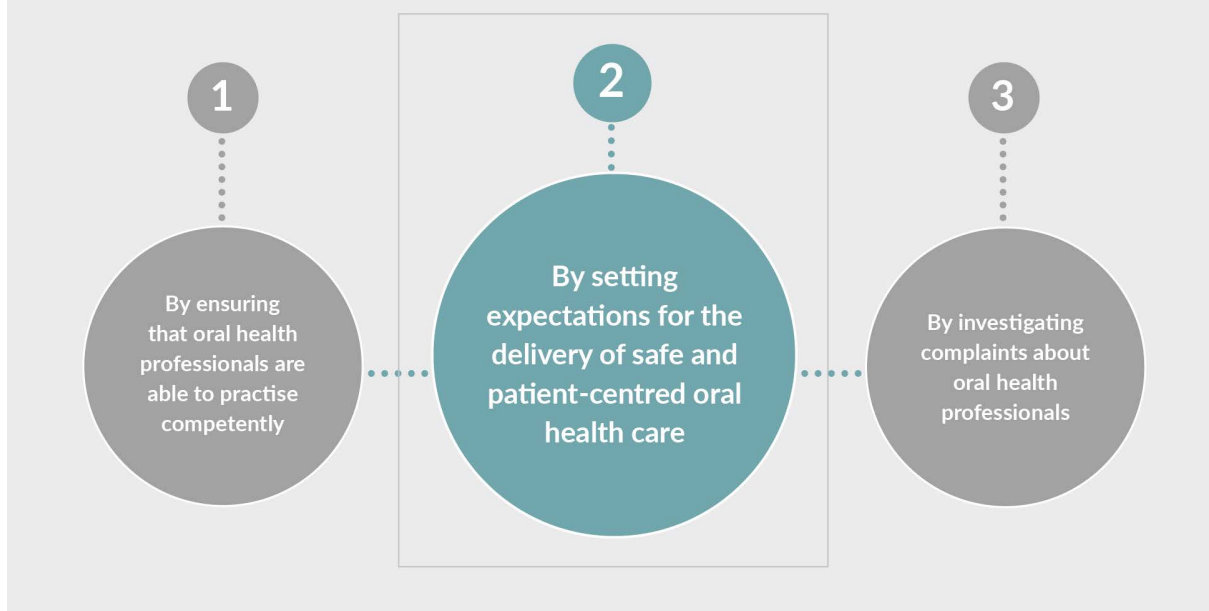


## Expectations for clinical and ethical practice

# Practice Standards for Recordkeeping

Applies to Dental Hygienists

There are three main ways that the BC College of Oral Health Professionals protects the public:



Disclaimer: This document was developed by the former College of Dental Hygienists of BC before the amalgamation of BC's four oral health regulatory colleges in 2022 and the introduction of BCCOHP's *Professional Standards for the Oral Health Team* (Professional Standards), effective June 30, 2025. The Professional Standards define the minimum expectations for professional and ethical conduct, performance, and behaviour for regulated oral health professionals in BC.

While BCCOHP is in the process of rescinding and replacing all legacy practice resources with unified standards, this document remains applicable.



# Practice Standards and Practice Standard Policies

## Dental Hygiene Practice Standards for Recordkeeping

A dental hygienist must document the dental hygiene care provided, following protocols of the practice setting.

### POLICY:

- Dental hygienists must label all client records with the client's name and the date.
- Dental hygienists must record accurate details of the dental hygiene care provided, including:
  - baseline assessment data
  - an interpretation of dental hygiene assessment findings (or a dental hygiene diagnostic statement)
  - a plan for services, particularly if the client needs or desires more than one appointment
  - notes about the services provided (in a clinical setting this would include pain control method(s) used and the type and amount of any agents used)
  - amount of time spent with the client, when appropriate
  - evaluation findings and next appointment planning details
  - precautions and instructions given (if any) possible risks (if any) of services planned and of not receiving the recommended services.
- Dental hygienists must make legible and objective record entries, in ink, initial or sign entries and corrections, and make corrections so that the original entry is still legible.
- Dental hygienists must record details of pertinent discussions and communications with the client and other health professionals and maintain copies of correspondence.
- Dental hygienists must document and initial the client's informed refusal to consent to any recommended aspect of care (the client may give a physical indication or verbal statement of refusal).
- When the dental hygienist owns the client's records, dental hygienists must retain records in a secure manner for no less than 16 years after the last client appointment\*.
- If electronic records are kept, the entries should be non-erasable and secure with the registrant's name or initials included in the entry.

\* The CDHBC's policy for the retention of dental hygiene records is the same as the CDSBC's standard for the retention of dental records. Dental hygienists who own clinics or mobile practices, own their clients' records. One of the issues affecting dental hygienists is the length of time it is necessary to retain records in the event of litigation arising from treatment. The College recommends that dental hygienists who own clinics obtain legal advice regarding this issue. Special rules apply in respect to minors and adults under a disability. (For additional information see the: The Limitation Act).