

Range of Services

- Removal of stains and deposits (plaque and calculus) from the teeth
- Detection and treatment of periodontal disease
- Polishing of teeth and fillings
- Taking of impressions for mouthguards and splints
- Application of desensitizing agents
- Fluoride therapy
- Oral hygiene instruction
- Dietary counselling
- Taking of radiographs
- Removal of sutures
- Application and removal of surgical periodontal packs
- Tooth whitening treatments

DimosDental

Level 6
252 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone (03) 9654 6667
Fax (03) 9654 6621

Email mail@dimosdental.com.au
Web www.dimosdental.com.au

The **Dental Hygienist**

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What is a Dental Hygienist?

The Dental Hygienist plays an important role in the dental team and is specifically trained to work together with your dentist to provide fully integrated dental care.

Primarily, the Hygienist uses [preventive](#), educational and therapeutic methods for the detection, evaluation and treatment of oral disease, with the ultimate goal being [optimal oral health](#).

[Dental disease is preventable](#). By keeping the teeth free of stains, plaque and tartar (calculus), we can greatly minimize the two major dental diseases: [dental decay](#) (caries), and [gum disease](#) (periodontitis).

The services of the Dental Hygienist are utilized in general and specialist dental practices, professional education, public health and institutional care.

Gum Disease

The major contributing factor to periodontal disease (gum disease) is plaque. Other factors may be physical irritants (impacted food), chemical irritants (smoking), dietary deficiency, pregnancy, systemic conditions (diabetes, leukemia), medication (anti-epilepsy drugs, steroids), other oral conditions (poorly aligned teeth, poor fitting dentures, bridges or fillings, as well as tooth grinding and bruxing).

Plaque is a colourless film of bacteria that naturally forms on the teeth. Plaque is most harmful when the bacteria is allowed to organize itself into colonies. This takes about 24 hours. The bacterial plaque irritates the gums, causing them to become red, tender, swollen and to bleed easily when brushing; this is [gingivitis](#). If the plaque is not removed, it will harden on the teeth to form calculus (tartar), which must be removed professionally. If gingivitis is left untreated, it may progress to [periodontitis](#). Periodontitis is usually a slow, painless but progressive disease, which not only affects the gums, but also damages the underlying supporting bone and ligament structures.

The Dental Hygienist plays a very important role in the detection and treatment of gum disease, as well as the constant re-evaluation and long term prevention of the disease. In addition to this, patient education and awareness is an important focus. Early diagnosis of gum disease is crucial, therefore regular continuing care appointments are advisable in the interest of good health.

Dental Decay

If not removed daily, plaque mixes with the normal sugars in the diet to form plaque acids and other by-products in the saliva. These acids dissolve the tooth surface and allow the process of dental decay (caries) to begin. Thankfully, dental decay can be greatly minimized with correct brushing and flossing techniques (reducing the amount of plaque present), various types of fluoride and by education as to the types of foods which are cariogenic (decay causing).

Often, dental decay in the initial stage can actually be reversed and the subsequent need for fillings eliminated. The Dental Hygienist, if visited regularly, greatly aids in the prevention of dental decay. By working with each individual patient in the monitoring of good oral hygiene and diet, together with fluoride therapy when required, optimal health is maintainable.