

VERMONT
Oral Health Care
for All
COALITION

Proposed Scope of Practice for Dental Therapists

There are 34 procedures listed in S. 20 under the proposed scope of practice for a dental therapist. Of these, 20 are currently taught and tested in the dental hygiene curriculum at VTC, 5 are reversible procedures that would be added to the current dental hygiene curriculum, and 9 are procedures that would be limited to the dental therapists' scope of practice, and taught and tested during the dental therapist curriculum.

Dental hygiene procedures incorporated into the VTC dental hygiene education program

1. Oral health instruction and disease prevention education, including nutritional counseling and dietary analysis
2. Periodontal charting, including periodontal screening exam
3. Exposing radiographs
4. Dental prophylaxis
5. Applying topical preventive or prophylactic agents, including fluoride varnishes, antimicrobial agents, and pit and fissure sealants
6. Pulp vitality testing
7. Applying desensitizing medication or resin
8. Fabricating athletic mouthguards
9. Placement of temporary restorations
10. Fabricating soft occlusal guards
11. Interim therapeutic restorations
12. Changing periodontal dressings
13. Administering local anesthetic
14. Administering nitrous oxide (legal in many states for dental hygienists. In VT, dental hygienists are educated and tested on procedure and allowed to monitor but not administer due to VT rules and regulations at this time)
15. Oral evaluation and assessment of dental disease
16. Formulating an individualized treatment plan (would need to be adapted to formulate for dental therapy procedures in combination with dental hygiene procedures)
17. Placement of temporary crowns
18. Prescribing, dispensing, and administering analgesics, anti-inflammatories, and antibiotics (educated and tested currently but not allowed to prescribe at dental hygiene level)
19. Brush biopsies
20. Mechanical polishing

Reversible procedures that would be incorporated into the VTC dental hygiene curriculum

1. Emergency palliative treatment of dental pain
2. Placement and removal of space maintainers
3. Restoring (filling) primary and permanent teeth, not including permanent tooth crowns, bridges, or denture fabrication
4. Preparation and placement of preformed crowns
5. Suture removal

Irreversible procedures not in scope of practice for dental hygienist to be performed by a dental therapist or dentist only

1. Tooth reimplantation (*tooth placed back in socket after being knocked out*)
2. Extractions of primary teeth
3. Non-surgical extractions of periodontally diseased permanent teeth (+3 mobility) (*very loose*)
4. Cavity preparation (*drilling, removing decay*)
5. Pulpotomies on primary teeth (*primary teeth have a large pulp chamber, and so a cavity doesn't have to be very deep to be involved with the pulp. During a pulpotomy, infected pulp material is removed, the resulting space is packed with a medicated filling before the cavity is closed*)
6. Indirect and direct pulp capping on primary and permanent teeth
 - a. *Indirect: when removing diseased dentin that comes very close to pulp, a thin layer of dentin is left over pulp to avoid spreading infection to pulp. Dentin is treated with substance to remineralize it and a temporary filling is inserted. Several months later the temp. filling is removed, the dentin is checked, and if all is well a permanent filling is applied.*
 - b. *Direct – when pulp is exposed due to trauma (broken tooth) or an accident during drilling, and there is no infection present, the breach can be sealed and filled in a single step process.*
7. Repairing defective prosthetic devices
8. Recementing permanent crowns
9. Tissue conditioning and soft reline (*relates to restoring health to gums for denture-wearers and adapting the lining of the dentures to fit a patient's changing mouth with a soft, flexible material*).