

PURE Dental Hygiene Care

There are many situations in which the dental hygienist needs to collaborate with other health professionals and initiate consultations and referrals for client care. These may include concerns about a client's systemic health, for example:

- consulting with a client's cardiologist regarding antibiotic prophylaxis,
- referring to a dietitian for nutritional counseling,
- referring to a physician regarding high blood pressure or management of diabetes
- referring Indigenous clients to Indigenous health service providers.

Other reasons for referral may relate to other medical-dental concerns (e.g., extra-oral or intra-oral pathologies, suspected caries, or progression of periodontal disease).

POLICY

In Ontario, it is the responsibility of a dental hygienist to develop and implement a process for consultation and/or referral with other health professionals in order to ensure the provision of safe and ethical dental hygiene care to the public. Best practice is for any consultations or referrals initiated by dental hygienists to be conveyed to the client and/or the other health professional in writing. Additionally, client informed consent will be obtained and any consultations or referrals initiated will be documented in the client's chart, as part of the legal record of care.

In order to act in the client's best interest, the dental hygienist will establish a collaborative approach with the client's dentist to mutually assess the need for further care from an appropriate dental specialist or other health care professional(s).

Dental hygienists at PURE Dental Hygiene Care participate in continuing competency courses on the identification of oral pathologies, so that they can communicate in a knowledgeable and collegial manner.