SUMMARY
This LawAtlas map shows where dental hygienists may provide the most extensive care to patients, including what fundamental oral hygiene services hygienists may provide to patients, where hygienists can practice with limited or no supervision by dentists, and what services they may provide with advanced experience and training.

ABOUT DENTAL HYGIENIST SCOPE OF PRACTICE LAWS & THE DATA
Oral health care is an essential component of overall health. Poor oral health can lead to nutritional deficiencies, chronic pain and time away from work or school. Dental hygienists provide essential support for the oral health care system in the United States. State laws and regulations determine where hygienists may practice independently, define which oral health services hygienists may or may not provide, and describe the required extent of dentist supervision when hygienists are providing services.

The laws that establish these requirements are found in statutes, regulations and dental board policies regulating the licensing and practice of dental hygienists, dentists and other dental professionals.

NAVIGATING THE DATA
There are two ways to navigate the map and the data on this topic: by selecting a state from the map, or by selecting criteria using the questions.

Option 1 – State by state: Using the map, click on the state of interest. A table will appear with details about that state’s law.

Option 2 – Multiple states: To view the law across multiple states, you may use the questions to filter through various criteria. Clicking on a question will expand the answers/criteria for you to select. In some cases, secondary questions may appear after answering one of the primary questions — these secondary questions dig deeper into the detail of that specific area of the law.

In addition, you can explore changes in the law over time. Once you’ve clicked a state or set your criteria, move the timeline slider to the left to view the law from previous years for a single state or across multiple states. To go back to the year you started, just move the slider to the right.

The primary questions are:
1. Are dental hygienists explicitly prohibited from practicing independently?
2. Are dental hygienists allowed to perform scaling?
3. Are dental hygienists allowed to apply fluoride?
4. Are dental hygienists allowed to apply sealants?
5. What other services may dental hygienists provide without supervision?
6. Can a dental hygienist provide services with a special license or permit?
7. Can a dental hygienist provide services on a volunteer basis?
8. Can dental hygienists provide services without a standard active state license?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Several resources are listed below to more fully explain the issues surrounding dental hygienist scope of practice and the laws that regulate their activities.


This collection of laws does not provide legal advice, nor does it address law enforcement, administrative policies, case law or any other sources of law. Should you have a specific question about laws in your state, please contact an attorney in your jurisdiction.