

Ministry of Health amends the oral health regulations

The Ministry of Health announced amendments to the regulations for dental technicians, denturists, dental hygienists, and dentists which came into force on February 24, 2020.

The amended regulations are in keeping with the Minister's desire to improve access to oral health services and to promote inter-professional, collaborative, team-based care and are intended to:

- align the regulations to the *Health Professions Act* model (characterized by two elements: shared scope of practice statements and restricted activities).
- standardize terms shared between the regulations.
- clarify that unregulated persons cannot perform the restricted activities that fall under these professions (unless authorized) and ensure that colleges have the necessary authority to act when unregulated individuals provide these services.

Below is a summary of the key changes to the Dental Technicians Regulation.

Dental Technicians Regulation

- The definition of a “**prescription**” has changed and the College of Dental Technicians of BC (CDTBC) is working collaboratively with the other oral health regulators to develop interpretive guidelines around the definition and requirements of an “authorization”.
- Dental Technicians may, on receipt of a **written request*** from a dentist,
 - Make or alter a complete denture and provide the denture to the dentist who requested it,
 - Make or alter a partial denture or overdenture and provide the denture to the dentist who requested it, if the request is accompanied by a prescription.
- A **Dental Technician** may take impressions **only** for the purpose of making or altering a mouthguard designed or offered for temporary protection against injury during sporting activities.

* **NOTE:** The CDTBC is working collaboratively with the College of Dental Surgeons and College of Denturists to develop policies, standards, and guidelines to address these new aspects of practice, and the definition and requirements of “a written request”.

A summary of key changes to the other oral health regulations are below.

Denturists Regulation

- The definition of “prescription” has been changed and the College of Denturists of British Columbia (CDBC) is working collaboratively with the other oral health regulators to develop interpretive guidelines around the definition and requirements of an “authorization”.
- Denturists may make minor adjustments to a partial denture or overdenture, without a prescription, if it does not change the original design of the prosthesis or with consent from the prescribing dentist.
- Denturists are not required to refer a patient back to the prescribing dentist for an examination after he/she has been fitted with an overdenture or partial denture.
- The requirement for denturists to provide a prescribed service within 90 days after the prescription is issued (or 365 days with the approval of a dentist) has been removed.

- Denturists, authorized by a prescription, may dispense a partial denture that is supported by implants and natural teeth.
- Denturists may reduce a complete dislocation of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) using manual therapy is included in the regulation, should it occur during treatment.
- Denturists may interpret radiographs.
- Denturists may perform tooth whitening.
- Denturists may provide sport mouthguards

Dental Hygienists Regulation

- 365 day rule has been removed, meaning that a dental exam is not required for dental hygiene care
- Dental hygienists may make a dental hygiene diagnosis identifying gingivitis or periodontitis as the cause of the signs or symptoms of an individual.
- Dental hygienists who have the proper certification may administer local anaesthetic without a dentist on site.
- Dental hygienists may initiate intra-oral radiographs for the purpose of dental hygiene care
- Enhanced clarity related to prescription drugs (prescription from a health care professional must be documented in the chart before a registrant can administer a Schedule 1 drug)
- Dental Hygienists may reduce a complete dislocation of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) using manual therapy, should it occur during the course of dental hygiene care.

Dentists Regulation

- Changes to the Dentists Regulation were limited to the standardization of terms shared between the regulations, and do not impact the scope of practice for dentists.

The College intends to continue to communicate with the other oral health colleges about the implications of these changes and will provide additional updates and guidance for registrants as soon as possible.