

# October 2005 YOUTH Health Bulletin

This publication compiled and edited by the H.E.E.L. Program  
(Health Education through Extension Leadership) Staff

# Pursuing a Career in Oral Health!

## What is a Dental Hygienist?

**Dental Hygienists** are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in dental hygiene, who provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services that support total health through the promotion of optimal oral health.

The **RDH** title stands for **Registered Dental Hygienist**. You can be assured that a registered dental hygienist has completed a nationally accredited dental hygiene program and has successfully passed national written and state clinical examinations. In addition, they have received a state license to provide preventive oral health care services and patient education.



To graduate from an accredited dental hygiene program, students receive an average of nearly 2,000 hours of classroom study in academic subjects emphasizing basic sciences, dental sciences, dental hygiene theory (including pain control, nutrition, oral health education, and preventive counseling), and **periodontics** (the study of gums and their supporting structures). This includes at least 600 hours of supervised instruction in preclinical and clinical skills.

**Dental Hygienists** who work as clinicians are called **Clinical Dental Hygienists** and may work in a variety of healthcare settings such as private dental offices, schools, public health clinics, hospitals, managed care organizations, correctional institutions, or nursing homes.

**Dental Hygienists** can also work in a variety of other professional settings as educators, researchers, administrators, managers, preventive program developers, consumer advocates, sales and marketing managers, editors, and consultants.

**YOU** can become a **Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH)**:  
**Stay in school and study science!!!**

### Requirements for Dental Hygiene School:

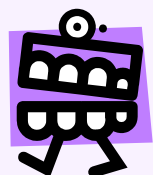
- High School Diploma
- Basic Chemistry
- Math
- Anatomy and Physiology

### Schools of Dental Hygiene in KY:

- ⇒ Western Kentucky University (WKU)
- ⇒ Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)
- ⇒ University of Louisville (U of L)

**Receive an Associates or Bachelor Degree and become an RDH!!**

**OCTOBER is NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH...**  
**Visit your favorite Dental Hygienist this month!**



## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BECOMING A DENTAL HYGIENIST?

### American Dental Hygienists' Association:

ADHA is the largest national organization representing the professional interests of more than 120,000 Dental Hygienists across the country.

For more information about ADHA, dental hygiene or becoming a Dental Hygienist, visit ADHA at

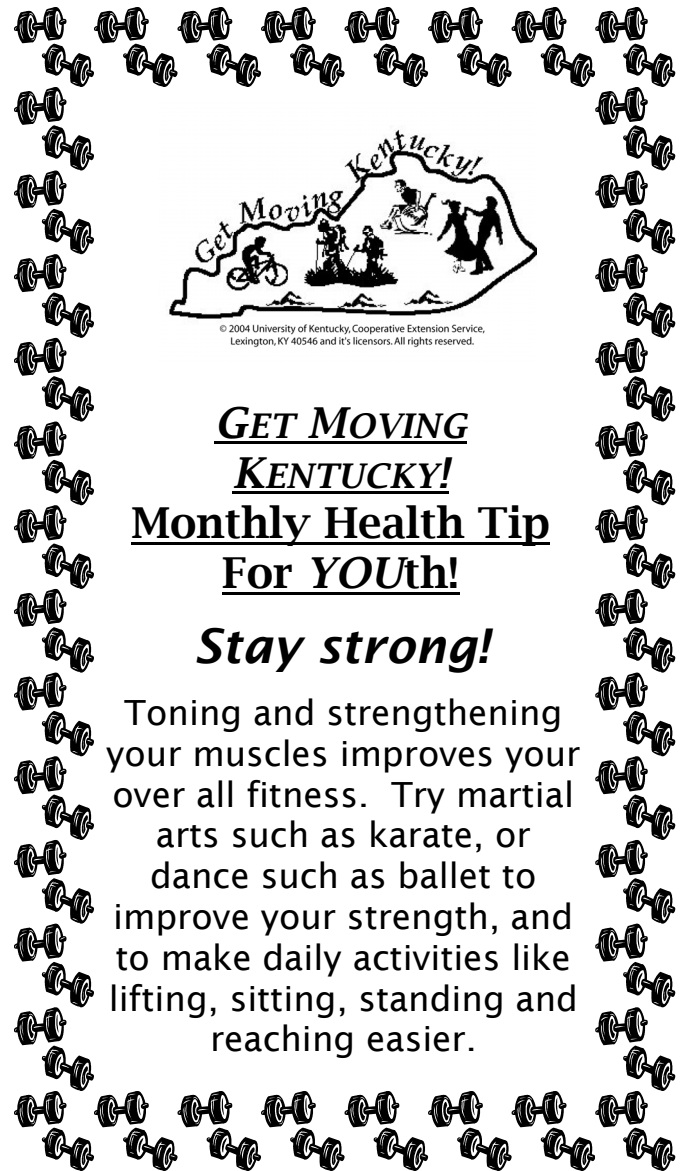
<http://www.adha.org>

### Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association:

The Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association is a member of the American Dental Hygienists' Association. The KDHA is an organization for professionals promoting total health through quality oral health care - making a difference in the Commonwealth!!!

If you would like more information about becoming a Dental Hygienist in Kentucky, contact the KDHA at:

KDHA  
PO Box 910406  
Lexington, KY 40591  
Phone: 859-223-8203  
Fax: 859-223-8202  
[www.kydha.org](http://www.kydha.org)



## GET MOVING KENTUCKY! Monthly Health Tip For YOUth!

### *Stay strong!*

Toning and strengthening your muscles improves your over all fitness. Try martial arts such as karate, or dance such as ballet to improve your strength, and to make daily activities like lifting, sitting, standing and reaching easier.

The October 2005 HEEL Monthly Health Bulletin was prepared by **Sharlee Shirley-Burch**, RDH, MPH, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension HEEL Program Health Specialist for Dentistry and University of Kentucky College of Dentistry Assistant Research Professor.

For more information on health issues in Kentucky, contact your local county Extension agent or visit the HEEL website at:

[www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL](http://www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL)

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### Sources:

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[www.adha.org](http://www.adha.org)
- ◆ Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association.  
[www.kydha.org](http://www.kydha.org)
- ◆ National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research.  
[www.nidcr.nih.gov](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov)