

OCTOBER 2005 HEALTH BULLETIN

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

Cooperative Extension Service

RDH: Prevention Specialist in Oral Health

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.

CAUTION:

Always ask who is cleaning your teeth...

Remember to ask for a Licensed Hygienist!

DID YOU KNOW??

Dental Hygienists screen for serious health problems, such as:

- » HIV Infections
- » Oral Cancers
- » Eating Disorders
- » Substance Abuse
- » Diabetes



OCTOBER is
NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH...
Get to know your Oral Health Preventive Professional!!

About the 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 the link between oral health and general health, visit ADHA at

<http://www.adha.org>

ADHA Oath for Registered Dental Hygienists:

"In our practice as Registered Dental Hygienists', we affirm our personal and professional commitment to improve the oral health of the public, to advance the art and science of Dental Hygiene and to promote high standards of quality care.

We pledge continually to improve our professional knowledge and skills, to render a full measure of service to each patient entrusted to our care, and to uphold the highest standards of the Dental Hygiene Profession and the public it serves."

About the Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association:

The Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association is a constituent 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!!!

KDHA Mission Statement:

The mission of the Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association is to improve the total health of all Kentuckians by ensuring access to quality oral health care and increasing awareness of the benefits of prevention while representing and promoting the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure and practice, thereby preserving the interests of Kentucky's dental hygienists.

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



GET MOVING KENTUCKY! MONTHLY HEALTH TIP

No pill can replace physical activity!

There is no magic pill that can replace the health benefits of being physically active. Have fun with your activity and make it something you enjoy. Form a group and walk together, or make it alone time set aside just for you.

The best kind of physical activity is the kind of physical activity you enjoy!



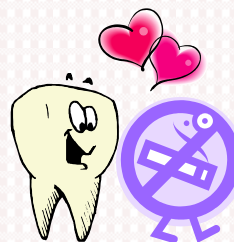
The October 2005 HEEL Monthly Health Bulletin was prepared by **Sharlee Shirley-Burch, RDH, MPH**, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension HEEL Program Health Specialist for Dentistry and University of Kentucky College of Dentistry Assistant Research Professor.

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



Don't forget to ask your **Dental Hygienist** about tobacco use, heart disease and **YOUR TEETH!**



Sources:

- ◆ American Dental Hygienists' Association. www.adha.org
- ◆ Kentucky Dental Hygienists' Association. www.kydha.org
- ◆ National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. www.nidcr.nih.gov