

# Getting to Know Your General Dentist

Your general dentist cares for your oral health, which is a vital component of your overall health. Read on to learn more about your general dentist and how he or she can help you and your family maintain healthy mouths.

## What is a general dentist?

A general dentist is the primary dental care provider for patients of all ages, which means he or she can treat you and your entire family. Your general dentist takes responsibility for the diagnosis, treatment, and overall coordination of services to meet your oral health needs. Your general dentist also is qualified to refer you to a specialist, or even your family physician, for the appropriate care, as necessary.

## How much education is required of general dentists?

Typically, a future dentist will study for three or four years at a university, with an emphasis on science, before completing four years of dental school. After graduating, dentists must pass their state's licensure examination to begin practicing, and they must regularly fulfill continuing education (CE) requirements to maintain their license. Academy of General Dentistry members go above and beyond the minimum state CE requirements, helping them to stay up-to-date on the latest innovations in their field and provide the best possible care to their patients.

## What kinds of procedures do general dentists perform?

General dentists are highly educated professionals who can provide a variety of services for you and your family, including:

- Complete dentures
  - Cosmetic procedures
  - Crowns and bridges
  - Dental cleanings
  - Dental implants
  - Gum disease treatment
  - Home care instruction
  - Mouthguards
  - Nutrition counseling
  - Oral surgery
  - Orthodontics
  - Partial dentures
  - Restorative care
  - Root canal therapy
  - Sealants
  - Temporomandibular disorder therapy
  - Tobacco cessation counseling
- Talk to your general dentist today to learn more about the services that he or she can provide for you.

## What is the difference between a DDS and DMD?

DDS stands for doctor of dental surgery, and DMD stands for doctor of dental medicine. Both designations require the same level of education, and a general dentist with either designation can provide you with quality oral health care.



## Where do general dentists practice?

Some general dentists own their own practices, while others are partners or associates with other dentists in a group practice. Others work in government health services, research programs, higher education, corporations, and the military.

## How often should I see my general dentist?

You and your general dentist will determine the number of visits necessary each year to help you maintain optimal oral health. In between visits, make sure to maintain your oral health by brushing your teeth for two minutes, twice a day and flossing once a day.



## KnowYourTeeth.com

Brought to you by the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), this website answers important dental health questions, offers the latest information on current treatments, provides tips for first-rate oral hygiene, and helps visitors find highly qualified general dentists near where they live.

**The AGD is a member of the Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives, a first-of-its-kind national dental coalition composed of 37 leading dental health organizations. Look for more information about the Kids' Healthy Mouths campaign at [www.2min2x.org](http://www.2min2x.org).**

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