

Defining Dentistry



Ever wonder why some dentists use the initials DMD while others use DDS? Do you know about all the different dental specialties that make up the dental profession? Here's a breakdown of various aspects of dentistry. Next time you go in for your dental cleaning, you can impress your dentist with your knowledge!

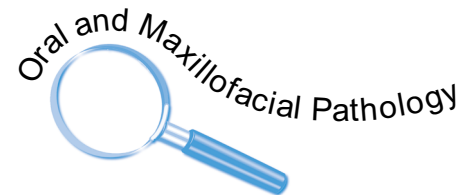


etiology, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases; and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions. A common procedure performed by endodontists is root canals.



DDS - Doctor of Dental Surgery vs. DMD - Doctor of Dental Medicine
Both suffixes indicate a general dentist degree awarded upon graduation from dental school. There is no difference between the two degrees; dentists who have a DMD or a DDS have the same education. However, universities have the prerogative to determine which degree is awarded. Both degrees use the same curriculum requirements set by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation. Generally, students are required to complete three or more years of undergraduate education plus four years of dental school to graduate as a general dentist. State licensing boards accept either degree as equivalent to the other, and both degrees allow licensed individuals to practice the same scope of general dentistry.

Dental public health is the science and art of preventing and controlling dental diseases and promoting dental health through organized community efforts. It is a form of dental practice concerned with the dental health education of the public, applied dental research, the administration of group dental care programs, and the prevention and control of dental diseases on a community-wide basis.

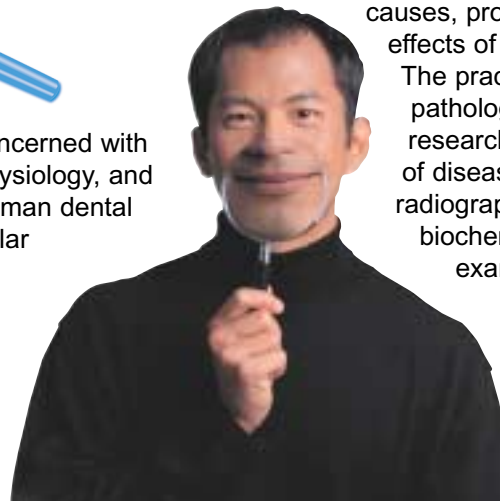


Oral and maxillofacial pathology is the specialty of dentistry and discipline of pathology dealing with the nature, identification, and management of diseases affecting the oral and maxillofacial regions. It is a science that investigates the causes, processes, and effects of these diseases.

The practice of oral pathology includes research and diagnosis of diseases using clinical, radiographic, microscopic, biochemical, or other examinations.



Endodontics is concerned with the morphology, physiology, and pathology of the human dental pulp and periradicular (root) tissues. Its study and practice encompass the basic and clinical sciences, including biology of the normal pulp; the



The Difference Between a DMD and a DDS . . . and Other Dental Mysteries



Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology

Oral and maxillofacial radiology is the specialty of dentistry and discipline of radiology concerned with the creation and interpretation of images and data—produced by all modalities of radiant energy—that are used for the diagnosis and management of diseases, disorders, and conditions of the oral and maxillofacial region.

tures, including those conditions that require movement of teeth or correction of malrelationships and malformations of their related structures. It also includes the adjustment of relationships between and among teeth and facial bones by the application of forces (braces) and/or the stimulation and redirection of functional forces within the craniofacial complex. Major responsibilities of orthodontic practice include the diagnosis, prevention, interception, and treatment of all forms of malocclusion of the teeth and associated alterations in their surrounding structures; the design, application, and control of functional and corrective appliances; and the guidance of the dentition and its supporting structures to attain and maintain optimum occlusal relations in physiologic and esthetic harmony among facial and cranial structures.

Periodontics

Periodontics is a specialty of dentistry that encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases of the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth or their substitutes along with the maintenance of the health, function, and esthetics of these structures and tissues. Periodontists work a great deal with people who have gum disease.

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Oral and maxillofacial surgery is the specialty of dentistry that includes the diagnosis and surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries, and defects involving both the functional and esthetic aspects of the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial region.




Pediatric Dentistry

Pediatric dentistry is an age-defined specialty that provides both primary and comprehensive preventive and therapeutic oral healthcare for infants and children through adolescence, including those with special healthcare needs.

Orthodontics

Orthodontics is that area of dentistry concerned with the supervision, guidance, and correction of the growing or mature dentofacial struc-

Prosthodontics

Prosthodontics is that branch of dentistry pertaining to the restoration and maintenance of oral functions, comfort, appearance, and health of the patient by the restoration of natural teeth and/or the replacement of missing teeth and contiguous oral and maxillofacial tissues with artificial substitutes. Dentures and implants are common treatments in prosthodontology. 

Internet Reference
www.ada.org/prof/ed/careers/definition.html#specialty



For more information regarding dentistry, contact the Massachusetts Dental Society at (800) 342-8747, or visit the Society's Web site at www.massdental.org.