

9 September 2011

Dear Practitioner,

**Follow-up Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice – Relating to Orthodontic Procedures**

Pursuant to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the “Act”), the Dental Council (“Council”) must, by notice published in the *Gazette*, describe the contents of its professions in one or more scopes of practice.

The proposal, outlined in the consultation document issued in May 2011, to align the activities relating to the orthodontic procedures of the dental hygiene scope of practice with those procedures contained in the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice, was supported by the majority of respondents and was approved by Council at its August 2011 meeting. However, a few submissions identified some areas that required further consideration and Council resolved to issue a follow-up consultation document.

This consultation document explores the possibility of clarifying the different levels of supervision for the procedures contained in the dental hygiene scope of practice by grouping these into the relevant categories of supervision levels i.e. clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision. In addition, the document includes a proposal to appropriately align the supervision levels of the orthodontic procedures already reflected in the “general” hygiene scope of practice, and to remove any duplication of procedures.

The objective of this consultation is to gather views from the sector to enable Council to make a final decision on the proposals. The Council therefore seeks any comments on the proposals by **4 November 2011**. In accordance with section 14 of the Act copies of this letter and the consultation document have been sent to all dental hygienists, dentists, relevant associations and societies, the Ministry of Health, District Health Boards and other organisations with an interest. This letter and attachment will also be published on the Council’s website, with a similar invitation to comment.

Responses should be sent to:

Dental Council  
PO Box 10-448  
Wellington 6043  
Fax: 04 499 1668  
Email: [consultations@dcnz.org.nz](mailto:consultations@dcnz.org.nz)

Yours sincerely



Marie Warner  
Chief Executive

# Follow-up Consultation Document

## Proposed changes to the Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice

RELEASED 9 SEPTEMBER 2011  
SUBMISSIONS DUE 4 NOVEMBER 2011

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### Background

The proposal, outlined in the consultation document issued in May 2011, to align the activities relating to the orthodontic procedures of the dental hygiene scope of practice with those procedures contained in the orthodontic auxiliary scope of practice, was supported by the majority of respondents. Council approved the proposed changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice, as reflected in the consultation document, at its meeting in August 2011. This included the proposal that the orthodontic procedures be performed under direct clinical supervision rather than clinical guidance as previously reflected in the hygiene scope of practice.

However, a number of submissions raised concerns that some of these procedures are currently reflected in the “general” hygiene scope of practice as procedures that can be performed under clinical guidance, and that those practitioners registered in the hygiene scope of practice, if they don’t have an exclusion on any of these procedures, are deemed competent to perform these procedures under clinical guidance.

In response to the submissions received Council decided to issue a follow-up consultation on the dental hygiene scope of practice with the following additional proposed changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice as detailed below.

#### *Group scope procedures based on level of supervision*

Council accepted a recommendation from one of the submissions to group the scope procedures into two separate categories based on the level of supervision required i.e. clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision as it provides clarity to practitioners on the level of supervision for specific procedures.

#### *Levels of supervision*

In response to the comments received about some discrepancies of the level of supervision required for the same procedures in the new proposed scope, Council resolved to review all the detailed orthodontic procedures proposed in the hygiene scope of practice, to identify any orthodontic procedures that can currently be performed under clinical guidance within the “general” hygiene scope of practice, and that pose no risk of irreversible damage to the orthodontic patient if performed under clinical guidance.

After this analysis the following changes to the orthodontic procedures are proposed:

To *remove* the following procedures from the orthodontic procedures' list as these are already included in the "general" hygiene scope of practice:

- taking clinical photographs for records.
- taking impressions. Obtaining a record of occlusal relationships.

To *change* the following procedures from direct clinical supervision to clinical guidance:

- *tracing cephalometric radiographs* - as treatment decisions will be the responsibility of the dentists/dental specialists.
- *supragingival polishing of teeth (as part of oral hygiene, before bonding and after removal of fixed attachments)* – this is already performed under clinical guidance in the "general" dental hygiene scope of practice under *scaling, debridement and prophylaxis of supra and subgingival tooth surfaces* but will remain listed as it contains specific orthodontic focus.
- *providing oral hygiene instruction and advice on the care and maintenance of orthodontic appliances* - this is already performed under clinical guidance in the "general" dental hygiene scope of practice under *providing oral health education, information, promotion and counselling* but will remain listed as it contains specific orthodontic focus.
- *making study models, and fabricating retainers, and undertaking other simple laboratory procedures of an orthodontic nature* - this is already performed under clinical guidance in the "general" dental hygiene scope of practice under *taking impressions, recording occlusal relationships and making study models* but will remain listed as it contains specific orthodontic focus.

## **The Proposal**

Council has issued this consultation document to explore the possibility of clarifying the different levels of supervision for the procedures contained in the dental hygiene scope of practice by grouping these into the relevant categories of supervision levels i.e. clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision. In addition, to appropriately align the supervision levels of the orthodontic procedures already reflected in the "general" hygiene scope of practice, and to remove any duplication of procedures.

## **Conclusion**

Council has produced a draft Notice (Attachment 1) that reflects the proposed changes to the dental hygiene scope of practice as described above.

Council is consulting on the proposal with persons and organisations identified in accordance with section 14 of the Act including all dental hygienists, dentists, relevant associations and societies, the Ministry of Health, District Health Boards and other organisations with an interest. The proposal will also be published on the Council's website, with a similar invitation to comment.

The objective of the consultation is to gather views from the sector to enable Council to make a final decision on the proposals.

Council therefore seeks any comments on the proposal by **4 November 2011**.

### **Discussion/Consultation points**

The Council invites all stakeholders to comment on this consultation document by responding to the following questions:

1. Do you agree/disagree with the proposal to group the dental hygiene scope procedures into the two relevant categories of supervision levels i.e. clinical guidance and direct clinical supervision, as reflected in Appendix 1?
2. If you disagree with the proposal, please provide your reasons.
3. Do you agree/disagree with the proposed changes to the supervision level of the four orthodontic procedures and the removal of the two procedures already covered in the “general” dental hygiene scope of practice, as reflected in Appendix 1?
4. If you disagree with the proposal, please provide your reasons.

# DENTAL COUNCIL

*Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho*

## Notice of Scope of Practice

Issued by the Dental Council pursuant to section 11 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003

### **Dental Hygiene**

**Keys:**

Red text: new additions

Blue Strikethrough-text: replaced/deleted existing text

### **Scope of Dental Hygiene Practice**

The scope of practice for dental hygiene is set out in the documented “Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice” produced and published from time to time by the Dental Council.

Dental hygiene practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental hygienist’s approved education, training and competence.

A dental hygienist’s major role is in the provision of oral health education and the prevention of oral disease to promote healthy oral behaviours. A dental hygienist’s primary task is in prevention and non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases. A dental hygienist guides patients’ personal care to maintain sound oral tissues as an integral part of their general health.

Dental hygienists practise in a team situation with clinical guidance provided by a practising dentist or dental specialist<sup>1</sup>, though some aspects of the scope of practice are provided under direct clinical supervision<sup>2</sup>.

### **Detailed Scope of Practice for Dental Hygiene Practice**

The Dental Council defines the practice of dentistry as the maintenance of health through the assessment, diagnosis, management, treatment and prevention of any disease, disorder or condition of the orofacial complex and associated structures.

<sup>1</sup> **Clinical guidance** means the professional support and assistance provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist as part of the provision of overall integrated care to the patient group. Dental hygienists and dentists/specialists normally work from the same premises providing a team approach. Clinical guidance may be provided at a distance but appropriate access must be available to ensure that the dentist or specialist is able to provide guidance and advice, when required, and maintain general oversight of the clinical care outcomes of the patient group. Dental hygienists are responsible and accountable for their own clinical practice within their scope of practice but the dentist or dental specialist is responsible and accountable for the clinical guidance provided. Further detail on the working relationship between dental hygienists and dentists will be set out in the relevant Dental Council Code of Practice.

<sup>2</sup> **Direct clinical supervision** means the clinical supervision provided to a dental hygienist by a practising dentist or dental specialist when the dentist is present on the premises at the time the dental hygiene work is carried out.

Dental hygiene practice is a subset of the practice of dentistry, and is commensurate with a dental hygienist's approved education, training and competence.

A dental hygienist's major role is in the provision of oral health education and the prevention of oral disease to promote healthy oral behaviours. A dental hygienist's primary task is in prevention and non-surgical treatment of periodontal diseases. A dental hygienist guides patients' personal care to maintain sound oral tissues as an integral part of their general health. Dental hygienists practise in a team situation with clinical guidance provided by a practising dentist or dental specialist, **though some aspects of the scope of practice are provided under direct clinical supervision.**

Dental hygiene practice includes teaching, research and management given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety.

Dental hygiene practice involves the following aspects -

***provided under clinical guidance:***

- obtaining and reassessing medical and dental health histories
- examination of oral tissues and recognition of abnormalities
- assessing and provisionally diagnosing disease of periodontal tissues, and appropriate referral
- obtaining informed consent for dental hygiene care plans
- providing oral health education, information, promotion and counselling
- scaling, debridement and prophylaxis of supra and subgingival tooth surfaces
- applying and dispensing non-prescription preventive agents and fissure sealants
- applying and dispensing topical agents for the treatment of tooth surface sensitivity and tooth discolouration
- administering topical local anaesthetic
- taking impressions, recording occlusal relationships and making study models
- taking impressions, constructing and fitting mouthguards and bleaching trays
- taking intra and extra-oral photographs
- performing postoperative procedures such as removal of sutures and placement and removal of periodontal dressings
- recontouring and polishing of restorations
- taking periapical and bitewing radiographs for the purpose of recognising disease of the periodontium<sup>3</sup>
- taking extra-oral radiographs
- assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures:
  - tracing cephalometric radiographs
  - supragingival polishing of teeth (as part of oral hygiene, before bonding and after removal of fixed attachments)

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<sup>3</sup> Section 15 of the Radiation Protection Act 1965 requires non-licensed persons who take x-rays to do so under the supervision or instructions of a person who holds a licence under that Act.

- providing oral hygiene instruction and advice on the care and maintenance of orthodontic appliances
- making study models, and fabricating retainers, and undertaking other simple laboratory procedures of an orthodontic nature

***provided under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist:***

- applying prescription preventive agents ~~under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist~~
- administering of local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration and inferior dental nerve block techniques ~~under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist~~
- assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures: ~~under the direct clinical supervision of the dentist or dental specialist:~~
  - ~~taking clinical photographs for records~~
  - ~~taking impressions. Obtaining a record of occlusal relationships~~
  - placing separators
  - sizing of metal bands and their cementation including loose bands during treatment
  - preparation of teeth for the bonding of fixed attachments and fixed retainers
  - indirect bonding of brackets as set up by the dentist or dental specialist
  - placing archwires as formed by the dentist or dental specialist when necessary and replacing ligatures /closing self ligating brackets
  - removing archwires after removing elastomeric or wire ligatures, or opening self ligating brackets
  - removing fixed orthodontic attachments and retainers
  - removing adhesives after the removal of fixed attachments using burs in slow speed handpieces where there is minimal potential for the removal of enamel
  - trial fitting of removable appliances. This does not include activation
  - fitting of passive removable retainers
  - bonding preformed fixed retainers.

***Dental hygiene practice involves:***

- ~~obtaining and reassessing medical and dental health histories~~
- ~~examination of oral tissues and recognition of abnormalities~~
- ~~assessing and provisionally diagnosing disease of periodontal tissues, and appropriate referral~~
- ~~obtaining informed consent for dental hygiene care plans~~
- ~~providing oral health education, information, promotion and counselling~~
- ~~scaling, debridement and prophylaxis of supra and subgingival tooth surfaces~~
- ~~applying and dispensing non-prescription preventive agents and fissure sealants~~
- ~~applying and dispensing topical agents for the treatment of tooth surface sensitivity and tooth discolouration~~
- ~~administering topical local anaesthetic~~
- ~~taking impressions, recording occlusal relationships and making study models~~

- ~~taking impressions, constructing and fitting mouthguards and bleaching trays~~
- ~~taking intra and extra oral photographs~~
- ~~performing postoperative procedures such as removal of sutures and placement and removal of periodontal dressings~~
- ~~recontouring and polishing of restorations~~
- ~~applying prescription preventive agents under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist~~
- ~~administering of local anaesthetic using dentoalveolar infiltration and inferior dental nerve block techniques under the direct clinical supervision of a dentist or dental specialist~~
- ~~assisting the dentist or dental specialist in implementing orthodontic treatment plans, prepared by the dentist or dental specialist responsible for the patient's clinical care outcomes, through performing the following orthodontic procedures under the direct clinical supervision of the dentist or dental specialist:~~
  - ~~taking clinical photographs for records~~
  - ~~taking impressions. Obtaining a record of occlusal relationships~~
  - ~~tracing cephalometric radiographs~~
  - ~~placing separators~~
  - ~~sizing of metal bands and their cementation including loose bands during treatment~~
  - ~~supragingival polishing of teeth (as part of oral hygiene, before bonding and after removal of fixed attachments)~~
  - ~~preparation of teeth for the bonding of fixed attachments and fixed retainers~~
  - ~~indirect bonding of brackets as set up by the dentist or dental specialist~~
  - ~~providing oral hygiene instruction and advice on the care and maintenance of orthodontic appliances~~
  - ~~placing archwires as formed by the dentist or dental specialist when necessary and replacing ligatures /closing self ligating brackets~~
  - ~~removing archwires after removing elastomeric or wire ligatures, or opening self ligating brackets~~
  - ~~removing fixed orthodontic attachments and retainers~~
  - ~~removing adhesives after the removal of fixed attachments using burs in slow speed handpieces where there is minimal potential for the removal of enamel~~
  - ~~trial fitting of removable appliances. This does not include activation~~
  - ~~fitting of passive removable retainers~~
  - ~~bonding preformed fixed retainers~~
  - ~~making study models, and fabricating retainers, and undertaking other simple laboratory procedures of an orthodontic nature.~~
- ~~taking periapical and bitewing radiographs for the purpose of recognising disease of the periodontium<sup>4</sup>~~
- ~~taking extra oral radiographs.~~

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<sup>4</sup> Section 15 of the Radiation Protection Act 1965 requires non-licensed persons who take x-rays to do so under the supervision or instructions of a person who holds a licence under that Act.

### ***Prescribed Qualifications***

1. Bachelor of Oral Health, University of Otago; or
2. Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health, Auckland University of Technology; and Dental Council approved course for Orthodontic Procedures; or
3. Certificate in Dental Hygiene issued by Otago Polytechnic and approved experience in the provision of oral health services within the scope of dental hygiene practice; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
4. New Zealand Defence Force training programme in Dental Hygiene and approved experience in the provision of oral health services within the scope of dental hygiene practice; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
5. Diploma in Dental Hygiene issued by a New Zealand educational institution; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
6. Diploma in Dental Hygiene, University of Otago (Orthodontic Procedures conferred from 2002) and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic and Extra-oral Radiography, or
7. Bachelor of Health Science (Endorsement in Dental Hygiene), University of Otago; or
8. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma from the Australian Dental Council or Dental Board of Australia accredited educational institution that included education in Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography and registration in Australia<sup>5</sup>; or
9. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma, or undergraduate dental degree; and a pass in the Dental Council Dental Hygiene Registration Examination; or
10. an undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma or undergraduate dental degree and a pass in the USA National Board Dental Hygiene Examination or Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination and a pass in a USA or Canadian regional or state board dental hygiene clinical examination; and registration with a USA or Canadian dental authority; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
11. a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CDA) accredited undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma; a pass in the USA National Board Dental Hygiene Examination or Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination; and registration with a USA or Canadian dental authority; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
12. a General Dental Council (GDC) accredited undergraduate dental hygiene degree or diploma from the United Kingdom; and registration with the GDC; and Dental

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<sup>5</sup> With the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme in 2010 all Australian State Licensing Boards were replaced by the Dental Board of Australia.

- Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography; or
13. a Certificate or Diploma in Dental Hygiene conferred by the GDC; and registration with the GDC; and Dental Council approved courses for Administering Local Anaesthetic, Undertaking Orthodontic Procedures, Intra-oral Radiography and Extra-oral Radiography.