

HOW TO ACE A DENTAL HYGIENIST INTERVIEW



Summary: Assuming you are caught and refreshed on your techniques, the sit-down interview should be a cinch when using these tips.

Now that you have your dental hygienist certificate, the next step is the interview process to actually get the job. A strong resume is not the only thing required to be considered a top candidate for a job. Interviews are where employers, often the dentist, gain their first impression of you. Follow these tips to ensure you are covering your bases before walking into that room for your interview.

- Make sure you bring all information with you including an extra copy of your resume, presentation portfolio, photo, and a list of references. Your list should include 3 to 5 professional references. Don't forget to ask them if you can use them as a reference and how they would like to be contacted. Giving them a copy of your resume will help them be prepared for when they get a call from an employer.
- Arrive early but not too early. Walking in the door 10 to 15 minutes early will show that you respect their time and that yours is valuable as well. Arriving too early only tells them you have nothing better to do.
- Tell the receptionist why you are there. A dentist's office has people coming and going all day. The front desk staff may just assume you are waiting for a patient if you don't introduce yourself. Be nice to the staff, quite often the receptionist is the dentist's wife.
- Balance how much you talk. The general rule is to speak no more than half of the time, one-third is best. Keeping your answers to two or three minutes helps you stay focused and on topic. Never interrupt or argue.
- Watch your nervous ticks. Practice answering interview questions with a friend or family member to pick up on when you use "umms" and "likes" often. You can minimize how often you use these verbal ticks by pausing and taking your time to answer questions.
- Follow the interviewer's approach. Use their interviewing style and body language. Give good comments or ask questions that show you have been paying attention.
- Be careful how you talk about the position. Use the third person to avoid sounding like you are hired for the job. Ask questions like "Does the dental hygienist schedule follow-up appointments?"
- Sell your qualifications and what you have to offer the dentist in improving their business.
- If this isn't your first dental hygiene position, then carefully explain why you left your previous employment. Keep your explanation positive. Talking badly about another dentist or how they run their office won't get you the job.
- Go in prepared with questions to ask and to answer questions they ask you. Some questions may be weird and catch you off guard but that is the intention. Show how you think on your feet with ease. Some good questions to ask are "How many active patients does the office have?", "What is the primary insurance that patients use?", "How much time is given to each patient for treatment?"
- Avoid talking about money until you have been offered the position. If they bring up the topic, suggest that you need to understand more about what the position entails. Before you start working for them, be sure to know what you are being paid though.
- Write a thank you note always! No matter how badly or amazingly the interview went, send a quick thank you in the mail to set you apart. You never know what might help you get a job so never leave out the easy stuff.

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