



Dentistry

Scouts BSA · Health & Safety

Name

Started

Completed

Dentistry is about how your teeth work, how to keep them healthy, and the people who care for smiles as a career. You'll get a peek behind the scenes at a dental office and learn habits that will help you for life.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/dentistry/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Tooth structure from X-rays

Tips for this section: Ask your dentist if you can look at your own X-rays. Then sketch a lower molar and label its parts, using a library book or website to check your work.

Example for this section: Label your molar drawing from the top down: enamel, dentin, pulp, crown, root, gum line, and the nerve and blood vessels inside. Compare it with an X-ray, where the enamel looks bright white and the pulp looks darker.

- ☐ **1a** With your counselor's guidance, use dental X-ray (radiograph) films or images to study how a tooth is built and look for decay

- ☐ **1b** Using the X-rays as your guide, draw a lower molar, label its parts and surfaces, and show the bone, gums, and other structures around it

- ☐ **1c** On your drawing, mark where nerves and blood vessels go into and out of the tooth

- ☐ **1d** On your drawing, mark where bacterial plaque is most likely to collect

2 Decay, gum disease, and injuries

Tips for this section: Make a quick list of what causes cavities and gum problems. Think about which of those you can control with daily habits, and why tobacco makes things worse.

Example for this section: Explain how decay happens: bacteria in plaque eat sugar and make acid, and the acid weakens enamel. Then explain how plaque left on the gum line can lead to gum disease, and why tobacco and vaping make gum problems worse.

- ☐ **2a** Tell or write what causes tooth decay and gum disease, and how bacterial plaque, sugars, and acid each contribute

- ☐ **2b** Tell what can cause a tooth to be knocked out or lost by injury, describe the kinds of mouth guards that help prevent it, and list sports where a mouth guard should be worn

- ☐ **2c** Explain the first aid steps for saving a knocked-out tooth

- ☐ **2d** Discuss how tobacco products can damage your mouth and teeth

- ☐ **3** Set up a visit with a dentist, asking ahead of time if it can include a dental exam and a demonstration of plaque control; ask your own questions there, then tell your counselor what a dentist does in a checkup

Tip: When you schedule your regular checkup, tell the office you're working on this badge. Many dentists and hygienists are happy to explain what they're doing.

4 Dental tools, casts, and diet: Choose 2 of 3

Tips for this section: Pick the two choices that sound most fun to you. Tracking your diet for a few days can be eye-opening about sugary snacks and drinks.

Example for this section: If you track your diet, list everything for a few days and mark foods that stick to teeth or bathe them in sugar, like soda, sports drinks, and gummy snacks. Then suggest swaps, like water or cheese.

- ☐ **4a** Name five or more instruments and five or more pieces of equipment that dentists use

- ☐ **4b** With a dentist's help, make a cast from dental stone using a dental vibrator, mixing bowl, water measure, plastic measure, model stone, and spatula

- ☐ **4c** Write down everything you eat for three days, circle foods that may give plaque bacteria the sugar they turn into acid, and list snacks to skip for the best oral health

5 Fluoride and the whole body

Tips for this section: Ask your dentist or hygienist how fluoride helps, and talk about how a healthy mouth connects to the health of the rest of your body.

Example for this section: Explain that fluoride makes enamel harder and can help repair early weak spots. Then share a connection between mouth and body health your dentist or hygienist mentions, like how infections in the mouth affect the rest of you.

- ☐ **5a** Discuss with your counselor how fluoride helps prevent tooth decay and the different ways it can get to the teeth

- ☐ **5b** Discuss with your counselor how the mouth connects to the rest of the body, such as through chewing, saliva, enzymes, nutrition, and speech

6 Sharing good dental care: Choose 2 of 5

Tips for this section: Choose two projects that let you be creative, like building a big model tooth or designing a poster for younger Scouts.

Example for this section: Build a big model tooth from clay or papier-mache with each layer a different color, or make a poster for Cub Scouts on brushing for two minutes. If you study ads, compare what a toothpaste commercial claims with what dentists recommend.

- ☐ **6a** Make a model tooth from soap, clay, papier-mache, or wax, and use it with string and a big brush to show your troop or a school class how to brush and floss correctly

- ☐ **6b** Make a poster about preventing dental disease that shows why good oral health matters

- ☐ **6c** Collect ads for at least five different toothpastes, list what each one claims, and tell how accurate the ads are

- ☐ **6d** Write a feature story for your school paper about caring for teeth and gums, including how tobacco products can hurt oral health

- ☐ **6e** Make drawings and write about how tooth decay gets worse over time, and describe the fillings and other treatments dentists use to repair it

- ☐ **7** Name three careers that use dentistry skills and knowledge; pick one and research its training, education, certification, experience, and costs to get started, plus job outlook, starting pay, and advancement; then tell your counselor what you learned and whether it interests you

Tip: Ask people at the dental office about their jobs: dentist, hygienist, assistant, lab technician. Find out what training each one needed.