



ORAL HEALTH THERAPIST

KAIKUAKU WAHA

Oral health therapists provide dental care to patients and teach people how to care for their teeth and gums.



Kia Ora **Hauora**
Supporting Māori into Health

WHAT IS AN ORAL THERAPIST?

Oral health therapists provide dental care to patients and teach people how to care for their teeth and gums. Oral health therapists may do some or all of the following:

- examine the patient's mouth, teeth, gums and jaw and prepare a treatment plan
- take and develop x-rays (if registered to do so)
- extract first teeth with a local anaesthetic
- recognise and treat periodontal disease (gum disease)
- educate patients on how to improve and maintain their oral health
- make mouthguards for sport, and stents (small plastic trays) for home bleaching
- whiten teeth
- maintain orthodontic appliances for patients
- keep records of treatment
- teach and/or carry out dental research
- refer patients to dentists or dental specialists

WHERE DO ORAL THERAPISTS WORK?

- for one or more dental practices
- usually work in a team situation at a general dental practice in your own treatment room,
- in school dental clinics or community based mobile units
- hospitals, iwi-based dental clinics

WHAT TRAINING IS INVOLVED?

To become an oral health therapist, you need one of the following:

- Bachelor of Oral Health from Otago University
- Bachelor of Health Science in Oral Health from Auckland University of Technology.

WHAT CLASSES SHOULD I TAKE NOW?

NCEA Level 3 is required to enter tertiary training. Useful subjects include:

- Biology
- Chemistry,
- Physics
- Te Reo Māori (optional)
- English
- Maths
- Health Education

