



College of Alberta Dental Assistants

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Position Statement

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

The College of Alberta Dental Assistants strongly recommends that all registered and provisional dental assistants obtain and maintain cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification for health care providers.

For the dental assistant to be adequately prepared to provide care and/or assist during an emergency situation, CPR certification should include, at a minimum, the following competencies:

- relief of choking for adults, children and infants;
- one and two person rescuer CPR for adults, children and infants;
- bag-valve mask techniques for adults, children and infants;
- rescue breathing for adults, children and infants; and
- use of an automated external defibrillator.

To maintain CPR, recertification should occur prior to the expiration date on the CPR card/certificate. Where there is no expiration date indicated on the CPR card/certificate, recertification should occur prior to the one year anniversary of the date of certification indicated on the CPR card/certificate. There should be no lapse in CPR certification.

To maintain competence it may be necessary for an individual to participate in CPR (re)certification training more frequently than as indicated by an expiry date.

CPR (re)certification training should include theory instruction and a hands-on component for skills practice and evaluation.

Rationale

As professionals in the health care industry, dental assistants are responsible for providing safe and competent care to the public. The potential for medical emergencies in a patient-treatment environment exists due to the increased risks involved in clinical treatment settings including, but not limited to, elevated stress levels and the use of anaesthetics which may result in syncope, hyperventilation, seizures, and allergic reactions. It is in the best interest of the patients and the entire dental health team if dental assistants, with proper training, are capable of providing care and/or assisting during an emergency situation.

All registered and provisional dental assistants are eligible to practice in a patient-treatment environment. Additionally, it is common perception among the general public that a health care professional would be able to assist in an emergency situation, regardless of where the situation occurs. (e.g. a dental assistant presenting to an elementary class) The College of Alberta Dental Assistants therefore views it as a professional responsibility of each registered and provisional dental assistant to obtain and maintain CPR certification for health care providers.