



ADA American Dental Association®

## The Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) Program: Notification of Transition to Year-Round Testing

March 12, 2023

The Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) is an examination that is overseen by the ADA's Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL). As of the date of this notification, candidates must attempt the Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) during pre-established testing windows that are spaced throughout the year. ATDH testing windows have occurred in the spring and fall, with additional restricted windows made available specifically for candidates who wished to retake the examination.

**Effective September 1, 2023, the ADA's Department of Testing Services (DTS) will implement year-round testing for the ATDH Program.** This change is anticipated to provide candidates and dental hygiene programs with additional flexibility. Under year-round testing, a candidate will be permitted to attempt the ATDH on any day of the year for which they can secure a testing appointment, provided they meet established ATDH eligibility criteria.

The transition to year-round testing will also be accompanied by an improvement in the speed with which ATDH results will be reported to candidates and dental hygiene programs. Under year-round testing, results will be reported within three to four weeks of the candidate's test date. In comparison, under the window-based system, results reporting can require as much as 12 weeks. At this time, DTS does not foresee any disadvantages to candidates, associated with this transition. As a point of reference, year-round testing has been in place for CDEL's Dental Admission Test (DAT) for many years and has worked extremely well.

Importantly, the transition to year-round testing necessitates a change to how retesting occurs for the ATDH. The following excerpt appears in the *Retesting* section of the *2023 ATDH Candidate Guide*. The changes that will become effective on September 1, 2023 are also represented below. Deletions are shown in ~~strikeout~~ text, and additions are shown in underline text.

~~Candidates are limited to one testing attempt per testing window. This policy cannot be appealed.~~ Candidates are required to submit a new application and fee for each testing attempt. A testing attempt is defined as any test administration where the candidate has been seated at a computer at a test center and electronically agreed to the confidentiality statement to start the test.

Candidates are required to wait 60 days between testing attempts on the ATDH. Candidates who have had three or more ATDH attempts must apply to the ATDH Program for permission to test again. After a candidate's third attempt, the following applies:

- the candidate may retest only once per 12-month period
- any request to test must be submitted to DTS in writing
- such requests must include evidence demonstrating the candidate's intent to apply to a dental hygiene education program

Please visit [ada.org/atdh](https://ada.org/atdh) for additional information, updates, and the latest news concerning the ATDH Program. DTS appreciates the opportunity to serve the needs of the dental hygiene community through this important examination program.