



Foundations *of* Professionalism



What you can expect from your dentist

Dentists have a legal, professional, and ethical obligation to act in the best interests of their patients, uphold patient autonomy, provide competent and respectful care and maintain the highest standard of professionalism.

You can expect to be treated with respect and receive safe, high-quality care that meets your needs.



For detailed information about dentists' obligations, read the [*Foundations of Professionalism*](#) document.



Respect your choices

Your dentist is required to:

- Listen to you and respond to your questions or concerns
- Involve you in decisions about your care
- Explain dental information in a way that you can understand
- Get your or your substitute decision maker's consent before starting any treatment
- Keep your personal health information private and confidential

Protect you from harm

Your dentist is required to:

- Follow all laws, rules and ethical standards that apply to dental care
- Be honest about their qualifications and skills
- Refer you to other health care providers when needed
- Avoid situations where their personal interests could influence the care they provide
- Keep your relationship strictly professional
- Use technology in ways that protect your safety, privacy and confidentiality, and quality of care
- Take responsibility for their actions and inform you if they caused any harm
- Maintain their own health and wellbeing to provide you with safe, high-quality care

Act in your best interests

Your dentist is required to:

- Put your health and wellbeing first
- Create a safe environment
- Treat you with kindness, compassion and respect
- Support you and collaborate with your other health care providers
- Help you access emergency care
- Promote good oral health for you and your community

Treat you fairly

Your dentist is required to:

- Follow legal rules about human rights and accessibility
- Treat everyone fairly and respectfully, without bias or discrimination
- Recognize and prevent bias from affecting their relationship with you and your care
- Respect your unique background and needs
- Support and empower you to make your own decisions
- Try to address the factors that impact your health and wellbeing

What you can do

Here's how you can be an active participant in your care:

- ☐ **Ask questions:** Don't hesitate to ask your dentist about your treatment, their professional responsibilities or anything you don't understand. Open communication helps build trust and helps ensure you receive informed care.
- ☐ **Read the Foundations of Professionalism document:** Learn more about the standard dentists are expected to uphold. The ***Foundations of Professionalism*** document outlines key principles and duties that guide ethical and professional behaviour.
- ☐ **Contact us:** If you have questions about professionalism or concerns about your experience with a dentist, contact the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) at info@rcdso.org or call 1-800-565-4591.