Dental Assistants in Prisons are in great demand. Most states are trying to establish dental programs that include preventative care for all inmates. This is generally less expensive than the high cost of many procedures that result from not taking care of your teeth properly and not receiving a cleaning twice a year.

Many Dental Assistants choose not to work in the prison arena because they are afraid to work with inmates. There are Dental Assistants who choose to work in prison facilities because they enjoy the challenge. Others really want to help all individuals, regardless of their criminal activities. They feel all individuals are entitled to quality dental care. Therefore, they do what they can to see that that level of dental care is available in all prison facilities.

Others simply do it for the fact that it often pays more than other dental facilities, especially if you are employed as a Dental Assistant in a Federal Prison system.

While the extra pay is often an incentive to work as a Dental Assistant in a prison system, the risk of injury and communicable diseases is much higher than in other dental facilities.

Dental Assistants need to make sure that they are aware of such risks before they enter a prison facility as an employee. If you don’t follow all policies and procedures as specified, you put yourself, other staff, and other inmates in grave danger.
Many inmates have nothing to lose by trying to escape. It is important for Dental Assistants to never let their guard down. Inmates are great actors and con artists. Trust your instincts if you feel something isn’t right. Dental Assistants should never be left alone with an inmate.

Inmates have been known to physically abuse Dental Assistants in an attempt to overpower them and escape. Most prison facilities safeguard against this by having the dental unit in a locked area of the prison that can only be opened by a guard outside the doorway of the dental unit. However, this does present the idea of taking a Dental Assistant or other staff member hostage as leverage to get their demands met.

Dental Assistants need to make sure they never leave dental tools or equipment in the reach of an inmate. They can use most anything and make it into a weapon. It is vital to keep close track of all dental tools.

Make sure to account for each and every tool prior to an inmate leaving the dental unit. If you think a dental tool is missing, notify your supervisor immediately. Then follow all policies and procedures in place for that particular prison facility.

Dental Assistants are at risk of contracting a communicable disease in any dental facility because such diseases are transmitted via saliva, blood, and other bodily fluids.

However, communicable diseases that can cause serious illness and even death are more likely to be found in a prison population than among the general public. Also, inmates are more likely to purposefully infect Dental Assistants and other staff members than the general public.

**EMPLOYMENT AS A DENTAL ASSISTANT IN A PRISON FACILITY IS A UNIQUE CAREER CHOICE.**

It is not one to enter into without considering the benefits and the risks involved. You will have the opportunity to provide quality health care to the prison population. You will likely earn considerably more money than in a regular dental facility.
However, the dangers of working as a Dental Assistant in a prison facility are very real. It is important to assess these risks and prepare against them. You will need to guard all dental tools and equipment. You will need to properly protect yourself against communicable diseases.

**THIS CAN BE A VERY REWARDING CAREER OPPORTUNITY, BUT MAKE SURE YOUR SAFETY AS WELL AS THEY SAFETY OF OTHERS IS ALWAYS A TOP PRIORITY.**