

Frequently Asked Questions Every Practice Should Know about HB 154 and the new BOD Rules 150-9-.01 and 150-9-.02 for dental assistants and expanded function dental assistants

As of January 1, 2018, Georgia licensed dentists have the option to authorize their dental assistant working under Rule 150-9-.01 General Duties of Dental Assistants, to provide a “rubber cup prophylaxis” on a patient with primary dentition.

New Rules for the Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) BOD Rule 150-9-.02 authorize a supervising dentist to delegate the EFDA to take and record vital signs, size and fit stainless steel crowns on a primary tooth and provide various orthodontic procedures.

To help dental offices understand the new 2018 rules for dental assistants and how they may interface with HB 154, the Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association Action Committee have provided the following list of frequently asked and answered questions.

1. **Question:** What is a “rubber cup prophylaxis”?

Answer:

- The GA BOD recognizes “rubber cup prophylaxis” as a “coronal polishing” procedure.
- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the American Dental Association (ADA) Glossary of Dental Clinical and Administrative Terms define “**coronal polishing**” as a procedure to remove stain and plaque from the enamel surfaces of the teeth.
- The Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association agrees with this definition of the coronal polishing procedure.

2. **Question:** Can a “rubber cup prophylaxis” (coronal polishing procedure) that is delegated to a dental assistant be billed to as a child prophylaxis?

Answer:

- **No.** The American Dental Association defines child prophylaxis as “the removal of plaque, calculus and stains from the tooth structures and may only be performed by a licensed dentist or dental hygienist”.
- The Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association agrees with the ADA definition of child prophylaxis.
- **Paragraph 1 of the Georgia BOD Rule 150-9-.01 (1) for General Duties of Dental Assistants state “under no circumstances may a dental assistant perform any operations catalogued as dental hygiene treatments”.**
- The Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association agrees with this rule.

3. **Question:** What is the difference between a “rubber cup prophylaxis” (coronal polish) and a child prophylaxis?

4. Answer:

- A “rubber cup prophylaxis” also known as “coronal polish” is the methodology used to remove plaque and stain from the tooth structure. The “rubber cup coronal polish” procedure is part of a prophylaxis but it does not have a CDT code and is not a billable procedure.
- “Child prophylaxis” is defined by the American Dental Association as the removal of plaque, calculus and stains from the tooth structures and may only be performed by a licensed dentist or dental hygienist.
- The Georgia Board of Dentistry “requirements for calculus removal” statement says, “Calculus, if present during a “rubber cup prophylaxis” must be identified and removed by a Georgia-licensed DMD/DDS or RDH only.
- The Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association agrees that calculus removal and a child prophylaxis may only be provided by a licensed dentist or licensed dental hygienist.

5. Question: The new rule under HB 154 allows a dental assistant to provide a “rubber cup prophylaxis” (coronal polish) on a patient with primary dentition. What is the age of a patient with primary dentition?

Answer:

- The American Dental Association Glossary of Dental Clinical and Administrative Terms define primary dentition as “the first set of teeth” or “deciduous teeth”. Most children will have all of their deciduous teeth by age 5.
- “Transitional” or “Mixed Dentition” refers to a mixed dentition beginning with the appearance of the permanent first molars (typically erupting at around age 6) and ending with the exfoliation of the deciduous teeth.
- The Georgia Dental Hygienists’ Association agrees with ADA definitions of primary and transitional dentition.
- The GA BOD recognizes and accepts primary and transitional dentition as the ages when primary teeth are present in a child.

6. Question: My doctor said that the existing rules for dental assistants let me polish teeth on all of his cleaning patients. Why can I only do it on children now?

Answer:

- BOD Rule 150-9-.01 General Duties of Dental Assistants (p) authorizes a supervising dentist to delegate that their assistant “Polish the enamel and restorations of the anatomical crown with the use of a slow speed handpiece (not to exceed 10,000 rpm), rubber cup and polishing agent.
- The procedure shall in no way be represented to the patient as a prophylaxis and shall only be used **for the purpose of enamel preparation for:**
1). Bleaching,

- 2). *Cementation of fixed restorations,*
- 3). *Bonding procedures including supramarginal enamel restorations after removal of orthodontic appliances.*

7. **Question:** The new rule (y) under BOD Rule 150-9-.01 says that a dental assistant can “use a rubber cup prophylaxis (coronal polish) on a patient with primary dentition. Do dental assistants need to take a course to be taught how to do this?

Answer:

- **Yes.** Rule (y) under BOD Rule 150-9-.01 state “a dental assistant may only begin providing rubber cup prophylaxis after the dental assistant has completed a curriculum approved by the Board or a minimum of eight hours of on-the-job training in the provision of rubber cup prophylaxis by a dentist licensed to practice in Georgia”.

8. **Question:** Have the Georgia BOD identified the educational requirements for coronal polishing?

Answer:

- **Yes.**

Training in Coronal Polishing (“Rubber Cup Prophylaxis”) for Dental Assistants

A dental assistant with at least one year of prior chairside experience or a graduate of an approved dental assisting program is eligible to attend an 8 hour pre-approved course of study that includes didactic and clinical applications necessary for coronal polishing (“rubber cup prophylaxis”) and shall include:

- Ethics and Georgia jurisprudence related to coronal polishing
- Identify the potential risks, indications and contraindications for coronal polishing
- Understand the definition of plaque, types of stain, calculus, and related terminology
- Dental anatomy and morphology for the proper identification of adult and child dentition
- Principles of coronal polishing including, but not limited to –
 - armamentarium;
 - proper positioning used/ergonomics,
 - preferred polishing technique using a stable fulcrum,
 - abrasive polishing agents commonly used in coronal polishing
 - polishing coronal surfaces of teeth on a typodont using a slow speed handpiece
- Indications for professionally applied topical fluoride agents for caries prevention
- Fluoride Delivery Methods

9. **Question:** With the passage of HB 154, that authorizes a supervising dentist to allow their dental hygienist to work under general supervision, can a dental assistant and or expanded function dental assistant work with the dental hygienist under general supervision to take and record vital signs, take and process dental x-rays, apply sealants and or fluoride and

provide a “rubber cup prophylaxis” (coronal polish) on a patient with primary dentition?

Answer:

- **No.** BOD Rules 150-9-.01 and 150-9-.02 state that these delegated duties **must be provided under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.** Direct supervision means that the supervising dentist is physically present in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the dental assistant and, evaluates the performance of the dental assistant before the dismissal of the patient.

10. Question: My doctor wants to boost production by using an “assisted” dental hygiene schedule where the assistant will take and record vital signs, take and process necessary x-rays, provide a rubber cup prophylaxis and apply fluoride and sealants.

Can a dental assistant be a “designated dental hygiene assistant”?

Answer:

- **Yes.** If the dental assistant is an expanded function dental assistant (BOD rule 150-9-.02) and has certification documenting that he or she has successfully completed a course pertaining to the specific duties delegated by the supervising dentist.
- BOD Rules 150-9-.01 and 150-9-.02 for dental assistants and expanded function dental assistants do not stipulate that delegated duties must be provided for the dentist only.

11. Question: What is the difference between a general dental assistant under BOD Rule 150-9-.01 and an expanded function dental assistant under BOD Rule 150-9-.02?

Answer:

- An expanded function dental assistant BOD Rule 150-9-.02 must have a high school diploma, or the equivalent thereof, proof of current CPR certification and a certificate documenting that he or she has successfully completed a course pertaining to the specific duties outlined in that certificate.

12. Question: Can an expanded function dental assistant provide the same duties as a general dental assistant under BOD Rule 150-9-.01?

Answer:

- **Yes**

13. Question: Under the new BOD Rule 150-9-.02 for expanded function dental assistants what vital signs can be taken?

Answer:

- Vital signs are defined as the signs of life which include; pulse rate, temperature, respiration rate and blood pressure.

We hope this FAQ information has helped answer any questions that you may have about the upcoming changes in the new dental assistant rules 150-9-.01 and 150-9-.02 and how they pertain to HB 154. The Georgia Dental Hygienists' Association Leadership and GDHA Action Committee are committed to providing the most up to date information impacting dental auxiliaries in Georgia.

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For more information, or to ask a specific question not answered on this page, please feel free to contact GDHA Immediate Past President, Suzanne Newkirk at snewkirk@gdha.org