

Choosing the Right Location for Your Dental Office

A practical planning guide and property-evaluation checklist for new dental practices.

A strong location supports patient access, efficient clinical workflows, and room for future growth. Evaluate both the market opportunity and the building's dental-specific requirements before making a commitment.

Selecting the right location is one of the most important decisions you will make when opening a new dental practice. Your location can influence patient convenience, visibility, operating expenses, staffing, long-term growth, and the overall success of your practice.

Begin by researching the surrounding community. Look at population size, household income, age demographics, residential growth, employment trends, and the number of potential patients living or working nearby. A growing community may provide more opportunities to develop a strong patient base, especially if the area is underserved by existing dental providers.

Evaluate the local competition carefully. The presence of other dental offices does not necessarily make an area unsuitable, but you should understand how many practices are nearby, which services they offer, and whether your practice can serve an unmet need. Consider how your services, hours, technology, insurance participation, or patient experience could differentiate your office.

Visibility and accessibility are also important. A location that is easy to find from a major road, supported by clear signage, and convenient to enter and exit can make the practice more appealing to patients. Make sure the property offers sufficient parking, accessible entrances, and convenient access for patients with mobility limitations.

Consider proximity to neighborhoods, schools, employers, pharmacies, medical offices, and other healthcare providers. Nearby businesses and healthcare professionals may help generate referrals while making the location more convenient for patients who want to combine appointments or errands.

Before signing a lease or purchasing a property, confirm that the space can support the technical requirements of a dental office. Review the electrical capacity, plumbing, water, drainage, compressed-air systems, vacuum systems, ventilation, internet access, and structural requirements. Verify that the space can accommodate treatment rooms, sterilization areas, X-ray equipment, mechanical equipment, laboratory space, staff areas, storage, and administrative functions.

You should also consider future growth. A space that meets your immediate needs may become restrictive as your patient base, staff, or range of services expands. Whenever possible, choose a location that provides room to add operatories, equipment, technology, or team members without requiring an expensive relocation.

Have the property reviewed by qualified dental equipment professionals, contractors, architects, and local authorities before making a final commitment. Confirm zoning, building-code, accessibility, permitting, and lease requirements early in the process. A thorough evaluation can help identify hidden renovation costs and prevent delays during construction or installation.

Dental Office Location Checklist

Use this checklist during site visits and professional property reviews. Add notes beside each item or use the final notes area to record follow-up questions.

Market and Demographics

- ☐ Research the surrounding population and patient demographics.
- ☐ Review residential and commercial growth projections.
- ☐ Evaluate household income and insurance coverage trends.
- ☐ Identify major employers, schools, and residential developments nearby.
- ☐ Determine whether the community can support your intended services.

Competition and Referral Opportunities

- ☐ Identify nearby general dentists and specialists.
- ☐ Compare competitors' services, hours, reviews, and patient positioning.
- ☐ Determine how your practice will stand out in the local market.
- ☐ Look for nearby physicians, pharmacies, specialists, and healthcare facilities.
- ☐ Evaluate opportunities for professional referrals and community partnerships.

Visibility and Accessibility

- ☐ Confirm that the office is visible from a well-traveled road.
- ☐ Verify that exterior signage is permitted and easily seen.
- ☐ Check whether patients can enter and exit the property safely.
- ☐ Evaluate traffic patterns during typical appointment hours.
- ☐ Confirm convenient access from nearby neighborhoods and highways.
- ☐ Verify accessibility for patients with disabilities and mobility limitations.
- ☐ Check access to public transportation when applicable.

Parking and Property Access

- ☐ Confirm that sufficient patient and employee parking is available.
- ☐ Identify designated accessible parking spaces.
- ☐ Make sure delivery and service vehicles can access the property.
- ☐ Check whether parking is shared with other tenants.
- ☐ Evaluate outdoor lighting and patient safety around the property.

Space and Operatory Planning

- ☐ Determine how many operatories the space can accommodate.
- ☐ Confirm adequate room for reception and patient waiting areas.
- ☐ Plan space for sterilization, storage, laboratory work, and supplies.
- ☐ Include private offices, consultation rooms, and staff areas as needed.
- ☐ Confirm that hallways and doorways can accommodate dental equipment.
- ☐ Determine whether additional operatories can be added in the future.
- ☐ Have a preliminary floor plan prepared before committing to the property.

Utilities and Technical Requirements

- ☐ Confirm adequate electrical service and available circuits.
- ☐ Inspect plumbing, water supply, and drainage capabilities.
- ☐ Identify locations for the air compressor, vacuum system, and mechanical equipment.
- ☐ Evaluate ventilation, heating, and air-conditioning capacity.
- ☐ Confirm internet and communication-service availability.
- ☐ Determine requirements for X-ray equipment and shielding.
- ☐ Evaluate structural support for wall-, ceiling-, or cabinet-mounted equipment.
- ☐ Obtain estimates for necessary utility and equipment upgrades.

Legal and Financial Review

- ☐ Confirm that local zoning permits a dental practice.
- ☐ Review building-code, accessibility, and permitting requirements.
- ☐ Have the lease or purchase agreement reviewed by a qualified attorney.
- ☐ Determine who is responsible for renovations, repairs, and utility upgrades.
- ☐ Negotiate tenant-improvement allowances when leasing.
- ☐ Review rent increases, renewal options, and expansion rights.
- ☐ Calculate renovation, equipment, moving, and operating expenses.
- ☐ Build a contingency allowance into the project budget.

Professional Inspection

- ☐ Have the property inspected by a qualified commercial inspector.
- ☐ Consult a contractor experienced with dental-office construction.
- ☐ Ask a dental equipment specialist to evaluate the proposed layout.
- ☐ Review the space with an architect or designer when appropriate.
- ☐ Obtain written estimates before signing a lease or purchasing the property.
- ☐ Confirm that the planned construction schedule aligns with your opening date.

Property Notes and Follow-Up

Need help planning your operatory?

Collins Dental Equipment | (859) 881-3996 | Sales@CollinsDentalEquipment.com