What you need to know:
The Coastal Bend College Dental Hygiene program is accredited by the Council on Dental Education and the American Dental Association. An Associate in Applied Science degree is awarded upon satisfactory completion of the program and a passing score on the National Board Examination (Capstone).

Students completing CBC’s Dental Hygiene Program will be academically and clinically proficient at entry-level to perform the traditional functions legally delegated to the dental hygienist in Texas. Completion of the entire program and recommendation by the program director are needed to qualify to take National and Western Regional Examining Board (WREB) examinations required for licensure.

Since class size is limited, admission is competitive. Students entering the program should have a strong science background. Two years of high school Biology II Honors or four semester hours of college biology and an approved chemistry course with a minimum grade of “C” are required.
What is a dental hygienist?
Dental hygienists are licensed oral health professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral diseases to protect teeth and gums and to protect patients’ total health.

They are graduates of accredited dental hygiene education programs in colleges and universities. Dental hygienists must take a written national board examination and a clinical examination before they are licensed to practice.

In addition to treating patients, dental hygienists may also work as educators, researchers and administrators.

What do dental hygienists do?
Each state has its own specific regulations and the range of services performed by dental hygienists varies from one state to another. As part of dental hygiene services, dental hygienists may:
- Perform oral health care assessments that include the review of patient health history, dental charting, oral cancer screening, and evaluation of gum disease/health;
- Expose, process and interpret dental radiographs (x-rays);
- Remove plaque and calculus (tartar) from above and below the gumline using dental instruments;
- Apply cavity-preventive agents such as fluorides and sealants to the teeth;
- Administer local anesthetic and or/nitrous oxide analgesia;
- Educate patients on proper oral hygiene techniques to maintain healthy teeth and gums;
- Counsel patients about plaque control and developing individualized at-home oral hygiene programs;
- Administer smoking cessation programs; and
- Counsel patients on the importance of good nutrition for maintaining optimal oral health.

Where do dental hygienists work?
Clinical dental hygienists may work in a variety of health care setting such as private dental offices, schools, public health clinics, hospitals, managed care organizations, correctional institutions, nursing homes or in a corporate environment. In addition to the clinical role, dental hygienists may also work in an administrative capacity in any of the above locations.

What does the “RDH” designation mean?
The Registered Dental Hygienist credential identifies a dental hygienist as a licensed oral health professional.