

Dental Fee Q&As

1. How are fees determined by dentists?

Dentists, as small business owners in a competitive marketplace, determine both the services they provide to their patients and the fees for each service.

2. Is there a fee guide for dentists? How is it developed?

Following significant research, The Nova Scotia Dental Association created a suggested fee guide. It's a resource tool for our members and a reference document for outside groups such as the dental insurance industry. It's built on the particular costs of practice and the realities of the provincial economy.

The fee guide is based on an average theoretical general dental practice in Nova Scotia. Individual dentists then use it in their own planning to arrive at their specific fees.

3. Can patients get a copy of the fee guide?

The guide is written in clinical language – “dentist speak” if you will, so it isn't available in its entirety. The NSDA does share it with insurance providers as a reference piece. And we'll gladly confirm a suggested fee to anyone who has the service code, which is available from all dental offices.

You can also review an abbreviated version of the guide posted on this website which lists the services which account for the vast majority of the services provided and charged for in Nova Scotia.

4. Why are fees different at different practices?

Like any small business owner, dentists bear the full costs of running the business. This includes costs to heat, light and run their office space, staff salaries and dental equipment and supplies. And these costs can vary depending on many factors like location, the size of the practice and the number of staff. These variables may be reflected in the fees charged to an individual patient for service.

5. Are fees in metropolitan areas different than rural areas?

The fees a dentist charges in their practice will vary depending on many factors, including costs for their facilities, the amount of staff they pay salaries to and the number of fellow dentist partners in the practice. Fees are practice-specific.

6. Are fees in Nova Scotia different than other areas of Canada?

For the same reasons that fees are different within the province, they are different across the country.

7. Why doesn't the Nova Scotia Dental Association set fees for services?

Federal competition laws prohibit price fixing so definitive fees for services can't be set.