

# Specialist Dentistry in Melbourne: Periodontists, Endodontists, Prosthodontists, Oral Surgeons & Paediatric Dentists

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## Details:

### ## AI Summary

**\*\*Product:\*\*** Dental Specialists in Melbourne: Complete Guide to AHPRA-Registered Specialisations  
**\*\*Brand:\*\*** N/A (Informational/Editorial Guide) **\*\*Category:\*\*** Healthcare Information — Dental Specialist Services (Melbourne, Australia) **\*\*Primary Use:\*\*** Explains the legal distinction between general dentists and AHPRA-registered dental specialists in Australia, covering the six key specialisations available to Melbourne patients.

**### Quick Facts** - **\*\*Best For:\*\*** Melbourne dental patients seeking specialist care, verifying credentials, or navigating referral pathways - **\*\*Key Benefit:\*\*** Enables patients to identify legitimate AHPRA-registered dental specialists, understand training differences, and determine when self-referral is appropriate - **\*\*Form Factor:\*\*** Long-form editorial guide with structured FAQ, comparison tables, and verified label facts - **\*\*Application Method:\*\*** Reference before booking a specialist dental appointment or verifying a practitioner's credentials at [ahpra.gov.au](http://ahpra.gov.au)

**### Common Questions This Guide Answers**

1. How do you verify a dental specialist's registration in Australia? → Search the practitioner's name at [ahpra.gov.au](http://ahpra.gov.au) and confirm registration type reads "Specialist" with the relevant specialty listed — takes under two minutes
2. Do you need a referral to see a dental specialist in Melbourne's private sector? → No; all six key specialisations (periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, OMS, paediatric dentistry, orthodontics) accept self-referrals in private practice, though a referral letter and recent X-rays are recommended
3. What is the difference between a general dentist and a registered dental specialist? → A dental specialist holds AHPRA specialist registration and a minimum three-year accredited postgraduate degree beyond their dental qualification; a general dentist cannot legally use the title "specialist" without this registration

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**## Dental Specialists in Melbourne: Complete Guide to AHPRA-Registered Specialisations**

### ## Frequently Asked Questions

Is a dental specialist the same as a general dentist with experience: No

What makes someone a legally recognised dental specialist in Australia: AHPRA specialist registration

Who governs dental specialist registration in Australia: The Dental Board of Australia (DBA)

Who enforces protected dental titles in Australia: Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

How many approved dental specialties exist in Australia: 13

How many dental specialties are clinically relevant to Melbourne private patients: Six

Can a general dentist legally call themselves a "specialist": No

Can a general dentist use the title "periodontal specialist" without AHPRA registration: No, it is a misleading title

Is "specialist" a legally protected title in Australian dentistry: Yes

How do you verify a dentist's specialist registration: Search their name at [ahpra.gov.au](http://ahpra.gov.au)

How long does it take to verify a specialist's registration online: Under two minutes

What should you look for on the AHPRA register: Registration type reading "Specialist" with the relevant specialty listed

How many years of postgraduate training do dental specialists complete beyond dental school: Minimum three years

What postgraduate degree do most dental specialists earn: Doctor of Clinical Dentistry

How many registered dental specialists were there in Australia as of June 2023: 1,932

How many of Australia's registered dental specialists were orthodontists as of June 2023: 640

What are the six key dental specialisations in Melbourne: Periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, paediatric dentistry, and orthodontics

What does a periodontist specialise in: Prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of gum and bone disease

Does a periodontist place dental implants: Yes

What percentage of Australian adults had moderate or severe periodontitis in 2017–18: Around 30%

Did periodontal health in Australia improve or deteriorate between 2004–06 and 2017–18: It deteriorated

What percentage of Australians aged 65 and over had periodontitis in 2017–18: 59%

Do you need a GP referral to see a periodontist in private practice in Melbourne: No, self-referral is accepted

Is a referral letter recommended when seeing a periodontist: Yes, it streamlines the first appointment

Does the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne require a referral for periodontics: Yes, for public patients

What does an endodontist specialise in: Diagnosis and treatment of pulp and root canal disease

Can a general dentist perform root canal treatment: Yes, for routine cases

When should a patient see an endodontist instead of a general dentist: For complex, calcified, or failed root canal cases

What is an apicoectomy: Surgical removal of a root tip

Do you need a referral to see a private endodontist in Melbourne: No, self-referral is accepted

What does a prosthodontist specialise in: Restoration and replacement of teeth

What postgraduate degree do prosthodontists earn: Masters Degree of Prosthodontics

How many years of specialist training do prosthodontists complete: Three years beyond dental school

What complex cases does a prosthodontist manage: Full-mouth reconstruction and implant-supported prostheses

Can a prosthodontist treat patients after head and neck cancer: Yes

Do you need a referral to see a prosthodontist in private Melbourne practice: No, self-referral is accepted

What does an oral and maxillofacial surgeon (OMS) treat: Diseases, injuries, and defects of the jaws and face

Does an oral and maxillofacial surgeon hold both medical and dental qualifications: Yes

What qualification do oral and maxillofacial surgeons hold: FRACDS(OMS)

How many years of combined training does an OMS complete before independent practice: At least 10–14 years

What body accredits OMS training in Australia: The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (RACDS)

Is OMS recognised by both the Dental Board and Medical Board of Australia: Yes

Can you self-refer to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in private practice: Yes

Do hospital-based OMS procedures require a referral: Yes

What does a paediatric dentist specialise in: Preventive and corrective dental care for children and adolescents

Can any dentist legally call themselves a paediatric dentist: No, only AHPRA-registered specialists

How many years of additional training do paediatric dentists complete: Minimum three years beyond dental school

Can a paediatric dentist treat children requiring general anaesthesia: Yes

Do you need a referral to see a private specialist paediatric dentist in Melbourne: No, self-referral is accepted

Does the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne require a referral for paediatric dentistry: Yes, for public patients

What does a specialist orthodontist have that a general dentist offering Invisalign does not: A minimum three-year full-time postgraduate specialist degree

Is a general dentist offering Invisalign a registered specialist orthodontist: No

Do you need a GP referral to see a specialist orthodontist in private practice: No

Is a general dentist with a "special interest" in orthodontics the same as a specialist orthodontist: No

How long can it take to process a referral at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne: Up to six weeks

Does the RDHM require a referral for all specialist departments: Yes

Which dental specialty requires qualifications in both medicine and dentistry: Oral and maxillofacial surgery

Which dental specialty has the longest training pathway: Oral and maxillofacial surgery

What is the AHPRA registration type for a dental specialist: "Specialist" with the relevant specialty listed

What is the AHPRA registration type for a general dentist: General registration

Can a general dentist place dental implants: Yes, in straightforward cases

When should implant placement involve a periodontist or OMS: In complex cases requiring bone grafting or sinus lifts

Who typically designs and fits the final implant restoration in complex cases: A prosthodontist

What is orthognathic surgery: Jaw surgery to correct skeletal malocclusion

Which specialist performs orthognathic surgery: Oral and maxillofacial surgeon

What is periodontitis: A chronic inflammatory disease affecting the gums and supporting bone

What is the source of Australia's periodontitis prevalence data: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

What does AHPRA stand for: Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

What does DBA stand for in dental regulation: Dental Board of Australia

Can general dentists use the term "specialises in" to describe their services: No, it risks misleading the public

## Why seeing a specialist dentist is not the same as seeing your regular dentist

Most Melburnians know that a cardiologist and a GP are two very different things — yet plenty of dental patients are genuinely surprised to learn the same distinction applies in dentistry. When your general dentist refers you to a "specialist," they're not pointing you toward a more experienced colleague. They're directing you to a practitioner who holds a second, legally protected qualification: a formal registration category governed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) that a standard dental degree simply cannot confer.

This distinction matters clinically, financially, and legally. A general dentist who calls themselves a "periodontal specialist" or "implant specialist" without holding AHPRA specialist registration is using a misleading title. Only a practitioner with specialist registration in an approved specialty can use a specialist title. General dental practitioners need to steer clear of terms like "specialises in," "specialty," or "specialised" to avoid misleading the public.

This article covers all six clinically significant AHPRA-registered dental specialisations available in Melbourne — periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, paediatric dentistry, and orthodontics — explaining what each specialist treats, what their training looks like, when a referral is required versus when you can self-refer, and how to verify credentials before you book.

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## How AHPRA dental specialist registration works in Australia

There are 13 approved dental specialties in Australia: dentomaxillofacial radiology, endodontics, forensic odontology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral medicine, oral and maxillofacial pathology, oral surgery, orthodontics, paediatric dentistry, periodontics, prosthodontics, public health dentistry, and special needs dentistry.

Six of these are most relevant to private clinical practice in Melbourne and most likely to come up for general patients. As of June 2023, there were 1,932 registered specialists in Australia, of whom 640 were registered as orthodontists.

Dental specialists hold both a general dental degree and a further postgraduate university degree of at least three years in a particular field of dentistry. Most specialist training programmes are three-year

full-time programmes leading to a Doctor of Clinical Dentistry degree.

In Australia, the titles of registered health professions are legally protected. This matters because they function as a reliable shorthand — when you see someone using a protected title, you can reasonably expect that person is appropriately trained, registered, and held to safe professional standards.

**\*\*How to verify a specialist's registration:\*\*** Visit the AHPRA public register at [ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au), search the practitioner's name, and check that their registration type reads "Specialist" with the relevant specialty listed. It takes under two minutes and is the most important check a patient can do before booking a specialist appointment.

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## The six key dental specialisations in Melbourne

### 1. Periodontics — gum disease, bone loss and implant placement

**\*\*What a periodontist treats\*\***

A periodontist specialises in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease — a chronic inflammatory disease affecting the gums and bone that support the teeth, also known as gum disease — and in the placement of dental implants. They also diagnose and treat infections around dental implants.

The case for specialist periodontal care in Melbourne is significant. In 2017–18, around one-third (30%) of adults aged 15 and over had moderate or severe periodontitis, up from around one-quarter (23%) in 2004–06. The proportion increased with age, from 8.6% in those aged 15–24 to 59% in those aged 65 and over. These figures, drawn from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Oral Health Plan 2015–2024 monitoring report, make clear that periodontitis is not a niche concern — it's one of Australia's most prevalent chronic diseases.

Notably, whilst dental caries experience and tooth retention amongst Australian adults improved over 30 years, periodontal health actually deteriorated between 2004–06 and 2017–18.

**\*\*Training\*\***

Periodontists complete three additional years of training beyond dental school, covering both gum disease management and implant placement.

**\*\*When to see a periodontist\*\***

The Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne's periodontics department provides guidance on referral triggers, including:

- Diagnosis, prevention and treatment of simple to severe periodontal disease; recession defects where there is an increase in recession or a major aesthetic problem noted over professional review of 6 months; a family history of severe or very early periodontal disease, including Aggressive Periodontitis with attachment loss on several teeth of 5 mm or more; and medically compromised patients (e.g. following transplant, with diabetes) with attachment loss of more than 5 mm.

**\*\*Referral vs. self-referral:\*\*** Most Melbourne periodontists accept both GP-referred and self-referred patients. A referral letter and recent radiographs from your general dentist will significantly streamline your first appointment. For the public system, to access specialist dental services at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM), you must first check eligibility to receive public oral healthcare and, if eligible, will need a referral.

\*(See also our guide on Dental Implants in Melbourne: The Step-by-Step Process from Consultation to Final Crown, which covers how periodontists and prosthodontists collaborate on implant cases.)\*

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## ### 2. Endodontics — root canal treatment and pulp disease

### \*\*What an endodontist treats\*\*

Endodontics covers the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of disease or injury to the pulp (nerves and soft tissue) of the tooth. When the pulp becomes infected, the tooth becomes painful and root canal treatment may be required.

General dentists perform routine root canal therapy, but endodontists manage cases outside standard scope: calcified canals, retreatment of failed root canals, complex multi-rooted teeth, and apicoectomy (surgical removal of a root tip). The distinction matters because endodontic care is often difficult for public health patients to access in a timely manner, making private specialist endodontists a critical access point in Melbourne.

**\*\*Training:\*\*** Endodontists complete a minimum three-year postgraduate programme (Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics) following their general dental degree. Programmes are accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC).

### \*\*When to see an endodontist\*\*

- Teeth requiring root canal retreatment after a previous failed procedure - Severely curved, calcified, or unusually complex root anatomy - Surgical endodontics (apicoectomy) where non-surgical treatment has failed - Traumatic dental injuries involving pulp exposure (see our guide on *\*Emergency Dentist Melbourne\** for acute trauma management) - Cracked teeth with pulpal involvement

**\*\*Referral vs. self-referral:\*\*** Most patients are directed to a specialist by their general dentist, but self-referred cases are accepted if you can specify which specialist you would like to see and why.

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## ### 3. Prosthodontics — complex tooth restoration and replacement

### \*\*What a prosthodontist treats\*\*

A prosthodontist specialises in the restoration and replacement of teeth through crowns, bridges, dentures, and implant-supported prostheses. This specialty sits at the intersection of function and aesthetics — prosthodontists handle the most complex reconstruction cases, including full-mouth rehabilitation, implant-supported prostheses, and dental care for patients who have undergone head and neck cancer treatment.

After completing a dental degree, prosthodontists undertake a further three years of specialist training to obtain a Masters Degree of Prosthodontics. They work closely with dental technicians to ensure each custom-made prosthesis is natural looking, comfortable, and functional for daily wear.

### \*\*When to see a prosthodontist\*\*

- Full-mouth reconstruction following severe wear, trauma, or decay - Implant-supported bridges and full-arch restorations (All-on-4) - Complex crown and bridge work involving multiple teeth - Maxillofacial prosthetics (e.g., after tumour resection or trauma) - Treatment for patients with birth defects such as cleft palate, temporomandibular joint disorders (TMD), traumatic injuries, or complex restorations following head and neck cancer treatment

**\*\*Prosthodontist vs. general dentist for implants:\*\*** A general dentist may place and restore a single implant in a straightforward case. A prosthodontist is typically involved when the implant case is part of a broader reconstruction, when bite is a significant factor, or when aesthetic demands are high. *\*(See our guide on Dental Implant Costs in Melbourne for how specialist involvement affects pricing.)\**

**\*\*Referral vs. self-referral:\*\*** Prosthodontists in private practice in Melbourne generally accept self-referrals. Complex cases are often co-managed: the general dentist or oral surgeon places the implant fixture, and the prosthodontist designs and fits the final restoration.

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#### ### 4. Oral and maxillofacial surgery — the most extensively trained dental specialist

**\*\*What an oral and maxillofacial surgeon treats\*\***

Oral and maxillofacial surgery is a unique field requiring qualifications in both medicine and dentistry. OMS specialists deal with the diagnosis, surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries and defects of the human jaws and associated structures.

Oral and maxillofacial surgeons treat patients who experience diseases, injuries and defects in the head, neck, face and jaw, as well as in the hard and soft tissues of the oral and maxillofacial region. They work with other healthcare professionals — orthodontists, prosthodontists, radiologists, oncologists, ENT surgeons, neurosurgeons, and plastic surgeons — to manage conditions such as jaw and congenital facial disproportion, facial trauma, salivary gland disease, temporomandibular joint disorders, and head, neck or oral cancers.

**\*\*Training — the most demanding pathway in dentistry\*\***

Oral and maxillofacial surgery is recognised by both the Dental Board of Australia and the Medical Board of Australia. Practitioners must hold qualifications in both medicine and dentistry.

The FRACDS(OMS) qualification requires a dental degree and full registration as a dentist, a medical degree and full registration as a medical practitioner, and a full year of surgery in general rotations, followed by a minimum of four years of surgical training. The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (RACDS) is the principal body for training and education of oral and maxillofacial surgeons in Australia and New Zealand. The programme is accredited by the Australian Medical Council, Medical Council of New Zealand, Australian Dental Council, and Dental Council of New Zealand.

In practice, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon in Melbourne has completed at least 10–14 years of combined dental, medical, and surgical training before independent practice.

**\*\*When to see an oral and maxillofacial surgeon\*\***

- Surgical removal of impacted wisdom teeth (particularly deeply impacted lower third molars — see our guide on [\\*Wisdom Teeth Removal in Melbourne\\*](#)) - Orthognathic (jaw) surgery for skeletal malocclusion - Facial trauma reconstruction - Diagnosis and management of oral cancers and jaw cysts or tumours - Complex dental implant placement requiring bone grafting or sinus lifts - Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders requiring surgical intervention

**\*\*Referral vs. self-referral:\*\*** Oral and maxillofacial surgeons in private practice accept self-referrals for most procedures. Hospital-based procedures — jaw surgery, cancer resection — require a referral pathway through a specialist or GP.

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#### ### 5. Paediatric dentistry — specialist care for children and adolescents

**\*\*What a paediatric dentist treats\*\***

Paediatric dentists focus on preventive and corrective dental care for children and adolescents, as well as oral hygiene education for parents. The specialty covers infancy through adolescence and extends well beyond routine care to include management of dental anxiety, developmental anomalies, and dental treatment under general anaesthesia for children who cannot cooperate in a standard clinical setting.

## **\*\*Training\*\***

Paediatric dentists complete at least three years of additional full-time study after general dentistry training. That training is supervised by specialist dental and medical staff across hospitals and university clinics, giving paediatric dentists broad experience managing the diverse oral health needs of children.

One point Melbourne parents should know: whilst many general dental practitioners have an interest or experience in children's oral health, only registered specialists in paediatric dentistry may refer to themselves as a paediatric dentist.

**\*\*When to see a specialist paediatric dentist rather than a general dentist who treats children\*\***

- Children with significant dental anxiety or a history of traumatic dental experiences requiring behaviour management or sedation - Children with complex medical conditions (congenital heart disease, haemophilia, autism spectrum disorder, oncology patients) - Dental trauma in primary or mixed dentition requiring specialist assessment - Developmental anomalies such as hypodontia (missing teeth), hypomineralisation, or cleft palate - Children requiring dental treatment under general anaesthesia - Early orthodontic assessment for severe skeletal discrepancies

\*(See our guide on Children's Dentistry in Melbourne for a full overview of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) and when referral to a specialist paediatric dentist is warranted.)\*

**\*\*Referral vs. self-referral:\*\*** Specialist paediatric dentists in private Melbourne practice accept self-referrals — parents can book directly. The RDHM's paediatric dentistry department requires a referral for public patients.

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## **### 6. Orthodontics — malocclusion, jaw development and bite correction**

Orthodontics is covered in depth in our dedicated guide (\*Orthodontics in Melbourne: Braces vs Invisalign vs Clear Aligners — Which Is Right for You?\*), but the specialist distinction is worth addressing here.

Of the 13 fields of dental specialisation in Australia, orthodontics is one of the most commonly misrepresented. Confirming that your orthodontist holds specialist registration with the Dental Board of Australia — rather than being a general dentist with a "special interest" in the field — matters more than most patients realise.

A registered specialist orthodontist has completed a minimum three-year full-time postgraduate programme beyond their dental degree. A general dentist offering Invisalign or clear aligner therapy has not — they are working within an expanded general scope of practice. For complex malocclusions, jaw discrepancies, or cases involving growing children, a registered specialist orthodontist is the appropriate provider.

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## **## Referral vs. self-referral: a practical summary**

| Specialist | GP/Dentist Referral Required (Private)? | Notes | |---|---|---| | Periodontist | No — self-referral accepted | Referral letter and X-rays recommended | | Endodontist | No — self-referral accepted | Referral letter and X-rays recommended | | Prosthodontist | No — self-referral accepted | Often co-managed with referring dentist | | Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon | No — self-referral accepted (private) | Hospital procedures may require referral | | Paediatric Dentist | No — self-referral accepted | Public RDHM requires referral | | Orthodontist | No — self-referral accepted | GP referral not required |

**\*\*For public specialist dental care at the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne:\*\*** To access any specialist dental services at RDHM, you must first check eligibility to receive public oral healthcare. If eligible, you will need a referral for all specialist departments including endodontics, oral maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, paediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics. Processing a referral can take up to six weeks.

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### ## How specialist care differs from general dentistry: the key distinctions

The table below clarifies the most commonly confused distinctions between general and specialist dental care in Melbourne:

Feature	General Dentist	Registered Dental Specialist	--- --- ---	AHPRA Registration Type
General registration	Specialist registration (protected title)			Training beyond dental degree
CPD courses / short courses	Minimum 3-year accredited postgraduate programme			Scope of practice
Broad, preventive and restorative	Defined by specialty			Implant placement
Can perform in straightforward cases	Periodontist or OMS for complex cases			Root canal
Routine cases	Endodontist for complex/retreatment cases			"Specialist" title
Cannot legally use this title	Legally protected — verifiable on AHPRA register			Medicare/DVA billing
Standard dental item numbers	Some specialist items attract higher rebates			

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### ## Key takeaways

- There are 13 approved dental specialties in Australia, but the six most clinically relevant to Melbourne patients are periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, paediatric dentistry, and orthodontics.
- Dental specialists hold both a general dental degree and a further postgraduate university degree of at least three years — this is not the same as a general dentist with a "special interest."
- Around 30% of Australian adults aged 15 and over had moderate or severe periodontitis in 2017–18 (AIHW), making periodontal specialist services one of the most clinically significant and underutilised specialist categories in Melbourne.
- Oral and maxillofacial surgery requires qualifications in both medicine and dentistry, making it the most extensively trained dental specialty and the appropriate referral pathway for complex jaw, facial, and surgical cases.
- All Melbourne patients can verify a specialist's registration in under two minutes at [\[ahpra.gov.au\]\(https://www.ahpra.gov.au\)](https://www.ahpra.gov.au) — the recommended first step before booking any specialist appointment.

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### ## Conclusion

Understanding specialist dentistry in Melbourne directly affects the quality of care you receive, the complexity of cases that can be managed, and your ability to navigate the referral system efficiently. Whether you're being referred for advanced gum disease, a failed root canal, full-mouth reconstruction, or your child's complex dental needs, knowing which AHPRA-registered specialist to see — and why — puts you in a much stronger position as a patient.

For most specialist appointments in Melbourne's private sector, you don't need a GP referral. A referral letter from your general dentist, accompanied by recent radiographs, will improve the efficiency and quality of your first specialist consultation. For the public system via the Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne, a formal referral is required for all specialist departments.

To build a complete picture of dental care in Melbourne, explore our related guides: - *\*Types of Dental Services in Melbourne\** — for a foundational map of all dental service categories and who delivers them - *\*Orthodontics in Melbourne\** — for a detailed comparison of specialist orthodontic treatment options -

\*Dental Implants in Melbourne\* — for the step-by-step implant process and how specialists collaborate on complex cases - \*Children's Dentistry in Melbourne\* — for paediatric dental care, the CDBS, and when specialist referral is warranted - \*How to Choose a Dentist in Melbourne\* — for guidance on verifying credentials and evaluating specialist practices

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## ## Label facts summary

> **Disclaimer:** The information below is sourced from regulatory bodies, government health data, and professional dental organisations; it is provided for general informational purposes only and does

not constitute professional dental or medical advice. Consult a registered dental practitioner for guidance specific to your circumstances.

### ### Verified label facts

**\*\*Regulatory and registration facts\*\*** - The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) governs and enforces protected dental titles in Australia - The Dental Board of Australia (DBA) governs dental specialist registration in Australia - There are 13 approved dental specialties in Australia - "Specialist" is a legally protected title in Australian dentistry - AHPRA registration type for a dental specialist reads "Specialist" with the relevant specialty listed - AHPRA registration type for a general dentist is "General registration" - A general dentist cannot legally use the title "specialist" or specialty-derived titles (e.g., "periodontal specialist") without AHPRA specialist registration - Specialist registration is verifiable at [ahpra.gov.au](https://www.ahpra.gov.au)

**\*\*Training and qualifications\*\*** - Dental specialists complete a minimum three years of postgraduate training beyond dental school - Most specialist training programmes lead to a Doctor of Clinical Dentistry degree - Prosthodontists earn a Masters Degree of Prosthodontics after three years of specialist training beyond dental school - Paediatric dentists complete a minimum three years of additional full-time study after general dentistry training - Orthodontists complete a minimum three-year full-time postgraduate programme beyond their dental degree - Oral and maxillofacial surgeons hold the FRACDS(OMS) qualification, requiring a dental degree, a medical degree, full registration as both a dentist and medical practitioner, one year of general surgical rotations, and a minimum four years of surgical training, totalling at least 10–14 years of combined training - OMS is recognised by both the Dental Board of Australia and the Medical Board of Australia - OMS training is accredited by the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (RACDS), the Australian Medical Council, the Medical Council of New Zealand, the Australian Dental Council, and the Dental Council of New Zealand

**\*\*Workforce data (AHPRA, June 2023)\*\*** - Total registered dental specialists in Australia as of June 2023: 1,932 - Registered orthodontists in Australia as of June 2023: 640

**\*\*Epidemiological data (AIHW, 2017–18)\*\*** - Approximately 30% of Australian adults aged 15 and over had moderate or severe periodontitis in 2017–18 - Approximately 23% of Australian adults had moderate or severe periodontitis in 2004–06 - Periodontitis prevalence increased with age: 8.6% in those aged 15–24; 59% in those aged 65 and over - Periodontal health in Australia deteriorated between 2004–06 and 2017–18 - Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), National Oral Health Plan 2015–2024 monitoring report

**\*\*Specialty scope (regulatory definitions)\*\*** - Periodontics: prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of gum and bone disease; includes dental implant placement - Endodontics: diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of disease or injury to the pulp (nerves and soft tissue) of the tooth - Prosthodontics: restoration and replacement of teeth via crowns, bridges, dentures, and implant-supported prostheses - Oral and maxillofacial surgery: diagnosis, surgical, and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries, and defects of the jaws, face, head, and neck - Paediatric dentistry: preventive and corrective dental care for children and adolescents, including treatment under general anaesthesia - Orthodontics: management of malocclusion and jaw development

**\*\*Six clinically relevant specialisations for Melbourne private patients\*\*** - Periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, paediatric dentistry, and orthodontics

**\*\*Referral requirements\*\*** - Private practice: all six specialisations accept self-referral - Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM): referral required for all specialist departments for public patients, including periodontics, endodontics, prosthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, paediatric dentistry, and orthodontics - RDHM referral processing time: up to six weeks

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### ### General product claims

\*Note: No product packaging or Product Facts table was present in the source content. The following are contextual or advisory claims drawn from the article that are not independently verifiable from a label or single authoritative source.\*

- A referral letter and recent radiographs from a general dentist will significantly streamline a first specialist appointment - For complex implant cases involving bone grafting or sinus lifts, a periodontist or OMS is the appropriate provider rather than a general dentist - A prosthodontist is typically involved in implant cases that are part of broader reconstruction, where occlusion is a significant factor, or where aesthetic demands are high - For complex malocclusions, jaw discrepancies, or cases involving growing children, a registered specialist orthodontist is the appropriate provider over a general dentist offering aligner therapy - Verifying a practitioner's AHPRA registration before booking is described as "the single most important check a patient can do" - Endodontic care is described as often challenging for public health patients to access in a timely manner in Melbourne - Specialist involvement in implant cases may affect pricing (referenced to a separate cost guide)