



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the National Association of Dental Laboratories (NADL)?

The National Association of Dental Laboratories is the unified voice of the dental laboratory profession supporting dentistry and serving the public interest by promoting high standards. NADL accomplishes this by providing programs, services and networking opportunities to meet the evolving technical, educational, professional and business needs of dental laboratories. For more information about the NADL, locate the "National Association of Dental Laboratories (NADL) Background and History" document contained in this advocacy kit. You can also visit www.nadl.org.

2. What is the "What's In Your Mouth?" (WIYM) campaign?

WIYM is a public awareness campaign by NADL that highlights the role and value of a trained and educated dental technician as part of the dental restorative team. It emphasizes the importance of professional standards such as the Certified Dental Laboratory (CDL) and Certified Dental Technician (CDT) credentials. For more information on WIYM, visit www.whatsinyourmouth.us.

3. What is a dental laboratory?

A dental laboratory produces dental restorations by order of a dentist. Dental laboratories create dentures, crowns, bridges, orthodontic appliances or other dental restorations such as implant crowns.

A dentist sends a specification (or prescription) of the item to be manufactured, along with an impression (mold) of the patient's mouth or teeth to the dental laboratory to be created by a dental laboratory technician.

4. What is a dental laboratory technician?

A dental laboratory technician create custom made dental restorations for dentists. They work based on the written order or prescription of the dentist. Dental laboratory technicians can specialize in several areas: orthodontic appliances, crowns and bridges, complete dentures, partial dentures, ceramics or implants. For more information on dental technicians, visit the following link: <http://www.nadl.org/certification/dental-lab-career.cfm>

5. What is a Certified Dental Technician (CDT)?

The Certified Dental Technician (CDT) designation is a great achievement and demonstrates a significant mastery of the knowledge and applied skills needed in dental technology. The National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology (NBC) certifies all CDTs. All dental technicians who possess the required education and/or experience, have a working knowledge of the English language and have not been found guilty of practicing dentistry illegally are eligible to become Certified Dental Technicians.

A Certified Dental Technician, or CDT, must undergo a series of evaluations and pass three tests within a four-year period. Once a CDT passes all tests, he or she must complete 12 hours of continuing education every year to keep skills up-to-date and to retain certification status. For more information on Certified Dental Technicians, visit the National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology (NBC's) website at <http://www.nbccert.org/>.



6. What is a Certified Dental Laboratory (CDL)?

The NBC certifies all CDLs. The Certified Dental Laboratory (CDL) provides assurance that a laboratory has met specific standards relating to quality assurance, safety, and business and manufacturing practices. By earning and maintaining the CDL designation, a dental laboratory is always monitoring and attempting to improve the quality and efficiency of their services and facilities.

Achieving and maintaining certification offers a laboratory a nationally-recognized credential attesting to compliance with competency standards that are widely accepted by dentistry and dental technology. This can be invaluable in establishing credibility with outside third parties, including courts of law, insurance companies and government. For more information on Certified Dental Laboratories, visit <https://nbccert.org/certificants/certified-dental-laboratory/CDL-consumers.cfm>.

7. How do I find a CDT or CDL in my area?

You can locate a Certified Dental Laboratory or Technician in your area by searching the NBC's online Who's Who Directory. The directory is located at the following link <https://nbccert.org/directories/nbc-whos-who/>.

8. Can I go directly to a CDT or a CDL for my restorations?

According to most state laws, a laboratory only may accept prescriptions from a licensed dentist; however, a patient may find a Certified Dental Laboratory in his/her area and request the contact information of a dentist who works with that laboratory.

9. Are all dental technicians and dental laboratories required to be certified?

In America, most states do not set minimum qualifications for persons to be employed as dental technicians, and domestic labs remain unregulated in more than 40 states. To see a list of states and dental laboratory technician requirements, click the following link: <http://whatsinyourmouth.us/state-regulation/>.

10. How do dental laboratories ensure quality manufacturing?

In addition to being a Certified Dental Laboratory, some laboratories are DAMAS-certified (Dental Appliance Manufacturers Audit System). The DAMAS specifications provide a clear-cut process for improving documentation in every facet of laboratory operations including: dental prescriptions/work authorizations; patient contact materials; subcontractor/supplier agreements; material and equipment purchases; employee training; maintenance and calibration of equipment; labeling; customer complaints; and material traceability.

DAMAS standards closely mirror the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Quality System and Good Manufacturing Practice (QS/GMP) specifications, which are required of all dental laboratories conducting business in the United States. You can also locate a DAMAS-certified laboratory by clicking the following link: <http://www.nadl.org/DAMAS/index.cfm>.