

## Dental X-rays

Our office policy with regards to preventative x-rays, is such that the day before your appointment, your dentist reviews your chart to determine if the x-rays would be needed to be complete in diagnosis & understanding the changes in your dental health. Dental X-rays are a valuable diagnostic tool, as many oral diseases cannot be detected on the basis of visual & physical examination alone. The frequency of dental radiography depends on a number of factors, such as the patient's state of oral health including cavity risk, number of existing restorations, level of oral hygiene (brushing & flossing), status of gum health such as gingivitis or bone loss, developing teeth & jaw growth, symptoms that a patient may be experiencing & other contributing factors. We do not automatically take x-rays due to a time period. When preventative x-rays are recommended, they are always prescribed by the dentist & never taken on the initiative of any staff member alone.

Some general points regarding dental x-rays:

- Dentists take precautions to ensure that radiation exposure is As Low As Reasonably Achievable (known as the ALARA principle).
- In the interest of ensuring the highest possible levels of patient & operator safety, dentists & other dental professionals within Ontario must adhere to legislation that specifies operator qualifications & technical performance standards for X-ray equipment.
- Dentists provide protective lead shielding, including thyroid collar, for patients to minimize radiation exposure.
- The amount of radiation that patients are exposed to from dental X-rays is very small when compared to exposure from natural sources such as cosmic radiation or earth & atmospheric radiation. For example, Average radiation in the U.S. from Natural sources (per year) is 3.0 mSV compared to 0.038 mSv for 4 bitewings.( Frederiksen , 1995) Radiation exposure from dental X-rays is also lower than most medical X-rays.
- Improved technology continues to reduce the amount of exposure per X-ray. Our office uses digital x-rays which reduces the exposure by at least half the amount.