

Dental Radiographs - What's the point?

A radiograph (“x-ray”) is the only way for your dental team to be able to properly examine the parts of your teeth that they cannot see by just looking in your mouth (between the teeth, below the gumline, under your existing fillings etc).

We need to see these areas to be able to diagnose tooth decay; often a radiograph will show decay before it is able to be seen in the mouth (or felt by the patient). This allows treatment to be more conservative and less expensive.

The radiation that you receive from a set of 4 bitewing radiographs is about the same as you’d get from flying between Halifax and Montreal.



A panoramic x’ray is the equivalent radiation to a flight between Halifax and Sydney, Cape Breton.



It would take 360 dental x’rays to equal the amount of radiation that the average citizen picks up from everyday background sources each year (outer space, the earth, natural materials etc).



Sleeping next to another person each night exposes each partner to an extra 0.02mSV per year. That’s the same amount as 2 small bitewing x’rays OR one panoramic x’ray.



In our clinic, we keep the amount of radiation exposure to a minimum through the use of fast speed film and lead apron protection. We also don’t ask for radiographs unless we feel they will assist in our examination of your oral health.