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# WHY DO I NEED DENTAL X-RAYS?

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Some dental problems are clearly visible, like a chipped front tooth, or painfully evident, like a full-blown cavity. Other issues are not so easy to see, and in some cases are impossible to pinpoint with the naked eye. Fortunately, we have X-ray technology to help us.

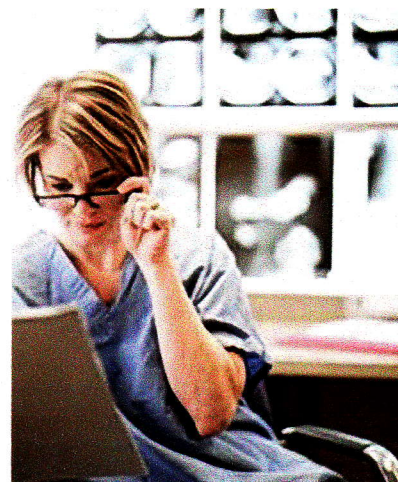
X-rays, also called radiographs, allow us to find many types of problems well in advance of any pain they might cause or visual signs they might produce. Some of the issues we can identify with X-rays include:

- **Bone loss or infection**
- **Tiny cracks in teeth**
- **Infections at the roots of teeth**
- **Bits of decay hiding between the teeth, under the gums, or near old fillings**
- **Impacted teeth, such as wisdom teeth that have not erupted**
- **Oddly-shaped tooth roots that need special attention in the case of a root canal**
- **Gum disease**
- **Abscesses or cysts**
- **Developmental abnormalities**
- **Some types of tumors**

The earlier we can detect dental problems, the better able we are to solve them quickly, before they become serious or cause damage. Regular X-rays also provide a historical record of your teeth, so we can observe changes over time. If you've come to us from another dental practice, your prior X-rays will acquaint us with your progress.

The benefit of dental X-rays – allowing us to pinpoint potential problems early and treat them before they cause damage – greatly outweighs the minimal risk associated with exposure to radiation. Radiation levels associated with dental X-rays are extremely low – not much higher than the normal amount of radiation you receive every day from the sun and household appliances like your TV or smoke detector.

How frequently you need X-rays depends on a variety of factors including your age, your dental health history, and any signs or symptoms we've observed. We will let you know how often you can expect to need them.



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