



This patient information sheet answers frequently asked questions about dental x-rays. It has been developed to be used in discussion with your dental practitioner.

1. What are dental x-rays and why are they needed?

Dental x-rays are images of the bones, teeth and surrounding tissues in your mouth. X-rays are used by your dental practitioner to help find and treat dental problems. X-rays also assist in finding early dental problems before they become more serious.

Your dental practitioner can look at the health of your teeth, mouth and jaws with an x-ray. Dental x-rays show tooth decay, fractures of the teeth, bone loss, infections inside the tooth or bone and the position of any teeth under the gum. They can also reveal other abnormalities such as cysts, tumours and cancers.



Image 1: Teeth x-ray

2. What are the different types of dental x-rays?

The main types of x-rays include the following:

- Intraoral x-rays are the most commonly used dental x-rays and show different aspects of your teeth. The film is placed inside your mouth while the x-ray image is being taken.
- Extraoral x-rays are used to find dental problems in the jaws and skull. The film is placed outside your mouth while the x-ray image is taken.
- Dental cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) allows three dimensional (3D) images of your teeth, soft tissues, nerves and bone to be produced in one scan. It is usually used for more complex dental cases.



Image 2: Child having an x-ray



Image 3: Child being shown an x-ray by a dental practitioner

3. What are the specific risks of dental x-rays?

Radiation is a general term that refers to energy that can travel through the environment. X-rays (medical radiation) are a type of radiation that can go through the human body. This allows x-rays to be used for medical purposes. The amount of medical radiation used in dental x-rays is so low that there is a very rare risk of any damage to the body.

Tell your dental practitioner if you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant, as the use of a lead apron is recommended if the x-ray beam needs to be aimed downwards at your chest or abdomen.

4. Important points to remember

- Your dental practitioner is licensed to take dental x-rays. They have been trained to use the lowest amount of radiation on the smallest possible area of your mouth.
- Tell your dental practitioner if you:
 - are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant
 - have had recent dental x-rays, as this may avoid the need for more dental x-rays.



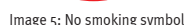
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Some dental clinics use digital imaging. After the x-rays are taken the image is sent directly to a computer. There is no need to develop the film. This technique uses less radiation than conventional x-rays. Images are immediately available on the computer screen.

Your x-rays will be taken by a dental or medical imaging professional who is registered to take x-rays.

Read about mouth care for yourself, babies, infants and children, and teenagers, emergencies and accidents, mouthguards, water fluoridation, and available dental services on the Queensland Health Oral Health website: www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth

www.health.qld.gov.au/consent has information on various dental procedures.



- talk to your dental practitioner, GP, pharmacist, or community health worker

- call Quitline: 13 QUIT (13 78 48)

- refer to the Queensland Government website:

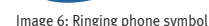
www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/atods/smoking/index.html



Please ask your dental clinic if you do not understand any aspect of the information in this patient information sheet or any other information you have been given about your condition, treatment options and proposed procedure.

To find a public local dental practitioner, search the Queensland Health Oral Health website “Contact Us” section for a dental service list. The website is:

www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/contact_us.asp



A private dental practitioner (who you may need to pay) may be found on the Australian Dental Association website using the “Find a Dentist” tool. The website is: www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist

Outside of dental clinic/service hours:

- if advice is required, call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84). 13HEALTH provides confidential health advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- if an emergency, call 000.

Your local contact details are:

