



## X-rays

Also known as: Radiographs

# Get the full picture

### Did you know?

The world's first x-ray was taken in 1895 by Wilhelm Röntgen of his wife's left hand.

### What are dental x-rays for?

X-rays are used to check the health of your mouth. They can reveal tooth and gum problems that otherwise wouldn't be visible:

- Tooth decay
- Teeth that haven't emerged from the gums
- Number, size and position of your teeth
- Bone loss
- Infected tooth roots
- Fractures to the jaw
- Oral tumors

### Who needs them?

Some people are more likely to need x-rays:

- **Children.** Kids' teeth and jaws are constantly developing.
- **Adults with many fillings or crowns.** Restorative work can make it harder to spot decay.
- **People with gum disease.** Getting regular x-rays can help monitor bone loss.
- **Smokers.** Smoking increase risk of decay and gum disease.



## Did you know?

The “x” in “x-ray” stands for unknown. We now know that x-rays are a form of electromagnetic radiation, but the name lives on.

## Are they safe?

Routine dental x-rays contain low levels of radiation. The effects are cumulative, so they add up over a lifetime. Dentists and hygienists follow protective measures to keep you safe:

- Covering you with a lead apron to minimize exposure
- Using a leaded thyroid collar to protect this sensitive gland (the collar may be part of or separate from the apron)
- Only performing x-rays when needed, based on your health and history

## What kinds of x-rays are there?

- **Bitewings.** The most common type of dental x-ray, you might have these during a regular exam or cleaning. Bitewings help your dentist spot any cavities between your teeth.
- **Panoramic.** These x-rays feature your whole mouth on a single x-ray. They’re taken once every three to five years and help your dentist see emerging teeth.
- **Periapical.** Showing the whole tooth, from the top of the crown to the bottom of the roots, these x-rays can reveal abnormalities of root and bone structure.
- **Occlusal.** These x-rays show an entire arch of teeth (top or bottom jaw), letting your dentist check tooth development and placement.
- **Full-mouth survey.** This is a complete set of x-rays covering your whole mouth. You might need it if you’re a new patient or have a history of cysts, tumors or root canals. It can also be used to see what kind of orthodontic treatment you may need.



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