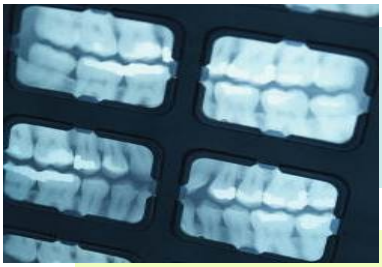

X-rays in Dental Offices

Dental X-ray examinations provide images necessary to help your dentist evaluate your oral health.

With the help of radiographs (the term for pictures taken with X-rays), your dentist can look at what is happening beneath and between surfaces of your teeth and gums.

If you have questions about your dental X-ray exam, talk with your dentist.

A dental X-ray can reveal:

- Tooth decay
- Condition of existing restorations
- Bone disease
- Abscesses, cysts, tumors
- Periodontal (gum) disease
- Developmental and other defects
- Injuries
- Other illness

Finding and treating dental problems at an early stage can save time, money and unnecessary discomfort. X-rays help your dentist find problems in your mouth that otherwise would not be seen.

How do dental X-rays work?

As X-rays pass through your mouth they are mostly absorbed by teeth and bone because these tissues, which are called hard tissues, are denser than cheek and gums (soft tissues).

When X-rays strike the film or a digital sensor, an image (radiograph) is created.

Radiographs allow your dentist to see hidden abnormalities, like tooth decay, infections and signs of gum disease, including changes in the bone and ligaments holding teeth in place.

Your dentist protects you

The New York State Dental Association successfully advocated for laws requiring New York State dentists to use lead aprons and thyroid collars when conducting dental X-rays.

How much?

The amount of radiation patients are exposed to from dental X-rays is very small but the effects are cumulative, so all radiation counts. X-rays should be used judiciously and with precautions to protect patients.

Ask your dentist...

Which type of dental X-ray examination provides the necessary information with the least amount of radiation exposure?

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