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Dental X-Rays and Your Health (1977)

American Dental Association

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DENTAL
X-RAYS
AND
YOUR
HEALTH



X-RAYS

are one of the most important aids your dentist has at his disposal to check for hidden problems that can affect your dental health or your general health. It is for this reason he will periodically suggest X-ray examinations.

Benefits of X-ray Examinations

X-ray examinations can reveal problems that visual examination cannot, such as:

1. early caries (cavities) between the teeth or under the gum line,
2. damage to the bony support of the teeth by periodontal (gum) disease,
3. delays in tooth eruption or jaw growth,
4. impacted or abscessed teeth,
5. bone diseases and tumors.

With X-rays, these problems can often be detected early enough to be treated with success. If you wait until they

cause pain or visible damage, the diseases can destroy your teeth, gums, and their supporting bone. Repairing your mouth may then require a great deal of time, effort and expense. Delay can cost you your teeth. An unseen tumor can threaten your life. Don't risk it. X-rays help your dentist help you keep your natural teeth for a lifetime.

Use of Modern Techniques

You may have heard or read statements that question the use of X-rays for dental examinations. There is no reason for any patient to be concerned when these examinations are made with modern methods and safeguards.

A number of new techniques and materials developed in the past ten years have notably improved even older X-ray equipment and procedures.

Dentists today use:

- high speed film (to shorten exposure time)
- filters (to eliminate unnecessary exposure)
- restriction of the X-ray beam (collimation) (to limit the exposure area)
- shielded, open-ended cones (to limit scattered radiation)
- precise timers (to reduce the length of exposure)
- lead aprons (as further protection of the reproductive organs from scattered radiation)

In addition, certain professional groups help dentists use X-rays carefully and precisely. These include the Council on Dental Research and the Council on Dental Materials and Devices of the American Dental Association, the Research Institute of the A.D.A. Health Foundation, the American Academy of Dental Radiology, and the Bureau of Radiological Health of the U.S. Public Health Service.

The activities of these groups help ensure that dentists are trained to use every modern measure possible to ensure your safety. Considering your specific oral health needs, your dentist will limit your X-ray examination to the minimum required for the diagnosis and prevention of disease.

Remember, your dentist uses X-ray examinations to help you keep your teeth and mouth healthy for a lifetime.



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