



Dental X-rays

Dental x-rays, also known as dental radiographs, are pictures of the internal structure of your teeth and bones. X-rays are a form of energy that travels in waves. When these waves travel through solid objects, the object either absorbs the waves

or they pass through the object. Your teeth and bones are dense, so they absorb x-rays. Your gums are less dense, so x-rays continue to pass through. As a result, these pictures allow your dentist to see if you have any problems below the surface of your teeth and gums.

X-rays help your dentist see problems long before they get too serious. For example, x-rays can show:

- Cavities between teeth and around old fillings.
- Bone loss caused by gum disease.
- Bone infections or abnormalities.
- Teeth that are trapped under the gums, such as wisdom teeth.
- Long or crooked tooth roots that will need special care if you are having treatment such as a root canal.
- TMD (temporomandibular joint disorder).

Are dental x-rays safe?

Every day, you are exposed to very low levels of radiation. The amount of radiation from a dental x-ray is extremely small. Experts recommend that x-rays be used with caution to protect patients from unnecessary exposure to radiation. Also, advanced technology allows the members of your dental team to greatly reduce your exposure to radiation.