

Factsheet

Dental X-rays

X-rays are an important part of dental check-ups and treatment. They help your dentist to see inside your teeth and jaw bones, and under your gums.

What can dentists see on X-rays?

- Tooth decay
- Problems with past dental treatment
- The amount of bone holding teeth in place
- Tooth and bone fractures following an accident or injury
- How close teeth sit to nerves, and other important parts of the face
- Abscesses, cysts, and tumours
- Teeth that are still growing under the gums
- Extra teeth, missing teeth, and teeth stuck under the gums

X-rays help dentists to plan treatments. This can include planning for fillings, dental implants, braces, dentures, root canal treatment, and tooth extractions.

Why does the dentist leave the room during an X-ray?

As a patient, you may only have a few X-rays every year. Dentists take a lot of X-rays every day. Even though X-rays are safe, the dentists leave the room so that they are not exposed to too many.

Who can have dental X-rays?

X-rays can be taken on children and adults. The type of X-ray your dentist takes will depend on what they are looking for.

How often should I have an X-ray?

This is different for everyone. Your dentist will tell you how often you should have X-rays. They will look at your teeth, your age, your old dental X-rays, signs of tooth decay or other diseases in your mouth and use this information to make a recommendation.

Are X-rays safe?

Dental X-rays are safe. They use a very low amount of radiation. Most dental X-rays will expose you to less radiation than a plane flight from Darwin to Perth.

Can I have a dental X-rays if I am pregnant?

Tell your dentist if you are pregnant. X-rays as part of a regular check-up will often be delayed until you are no longer pregnant. If you have a toothache or a dental emergency, dental X-rays can be safely taken during pregnancy.

Read more
about dental
X-ray safety

