

Information Sheet for an appropriate person if the individual undergoing an exposure is an adult who lacks capacity or competence to consent to their treatment or diagnosis.

This information sheet is designed to provide you with information on the dental radiographic examination the dentist has requested.

Dental radiographs (X-rays) allow the dentist to see parts of the teeth and jaws that cannot be examined just by looking inside the mouth. They are used to detect many diseases including dental caries (tooth decay), periodontal disease (gum disease) and other abnormalities of the teeth and jaws.

These examinations use radiation to produce the image. Everyone is exposed to radiation in the form of natural background radiation. The main source of this in the UK is due to radon gas released from rocks but other sources include Cosmic Radiation originating in space and some of the foods we eat such as some shellfish.

The radiation dose received from dental radiography is the equivalent to an additional few hours or days of natural background radiation, so the risk is very low. The main health risk is the development of cancer. However, the risk is minimal/negligible and the benefit in having the radiograph(s) carried out would outweigh the health risk. Information for common dental radiographic examinations is shown in the table below.

Examination	Time to receive equivalent dose from natural background radiation	Radiation Risk
Intraoral Radiograph (An X-ray examination where a small imaging plate is placed inside the mouth)	8 hours	Negligible
Panoramic Radiograph (An X-ray examination that shows all the teeth on one image. The image receptor is outside the mouth)	3 days	Minimal/Negligible
Cone Beam Computed Tomography Scan (An examination that produces a 3D image of the teeth and jaws)	3-24 days	Minimal

Author	Owner	Revision	Active date	Review Date Due	Page
ND	Dental Directorate	1	18/02/25	18/02/27	Page 1 of 2
<b>This document is uncontrolled once printed or downloaded</b>					



## What will happen when the radiograph (X-ray picture) is taken

- When the patient is seen in the Dental Radiology Department they will either be seen by a qualified member of staff or by a student under direct supervision by a qualified member of staff. The procedure will be explained to you. It is important for all examinations that the patient keeps still so the images produced are of sufficient quality to allow the dentist to diagnose any dental disease.
- If the request is for an 'intraoral radiograph', the patient will be sitting on a chair and the imaging plate will be carefully placed inside the mouth and the X-ray beam aimed at the imaging plate and the exposure made. For a panoramic radiograph your child will be generally standing up and the X-ray unit rotates around the head to produce the image. Similarly, for a cone beam computed tomography examination, the X-ray machine rotates around the head to produce the image, but your child will generally be standing up.
- Some examinations may also be carried out with the patient in their wheelchair if required.
- You will be able to see the patient during the examination but in most cases, you will have to stay outside the cubicle so you are not exposed to radiation.
- The equipment used is modern and the lowest radiographic exposure is selected to keep the radiation risk (and the risk) as low as possible.
- Once the examination is complete the images are stored on the hospital radiology system and can be viewed by your dentist on the clinic. The dentist will go through the results with you.

If you have any questions please ask either your dentist or one of the staff in the Dental Radiology Department.

INSERT QR code

Author	Owner	Revision	Active date	Review Date Due	Page
ND	Dental Directorate	1	18/02/25	18/02/27	Page 2 of 2
<b>This document is uncontrolled once printed or downloaded</b>					