

Information Sheet for a Patient who may be Pregnant Undergoing Dental Radiography

This information sheet is designed to provide you with information about having dental radiographs taken during pregnancy.

The doses arising from dental radiography are extremely low and are the equivalent to days or hours of natural background radiation (unavoidable radiation that everyone is exposed to such as cosmic radiation). The X-ray examination is 'optimised' to reduce the radiation doses as much as possible. The exposure is optimised by using modern equipment and by using modern techniques.

In addition, the X-ray beam in dental radiography is aimed towards the jaws. The abdomen is not in the beam so the amount of radiation that is scattered towards the abdomen is so low that the risk to an unborn baby is considered to be negligible. For this reason, it is not necessary to routinely ask patients if they are pregnant prior to dental radiography.

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

- When you are seen in the Dental Radiology Department you 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.
- The equipment used is modern and the lowest radiographic exposure is selected to keep the radiation dose (and the risk) as low as possible.
- As the risk to the unborn baby is so low, lead aprons are not routinely used when undertaking dental radiography.
- 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.

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