



Southern Smiles

Radiographs & X-Rays Policy For Pediatric Dental Patients

A 'radiograph' is a picture that is created of the teeth and supporting bone. The picture allows the dentist to essentially see through the structures of the teeth and evaluate the health of the tooth and supporting bone. The term 'x-ray' actually refers to the invisible electromagnetic wave that is passed through the body to create the radiograph picture. So x-rays allow us to create radiographs. The lay-person generally uses the term 'x-ray' to describe what a dentist calls a radiograph. Don't worry, we know how to speak in terms that make it easy for parents!

For radiographs / x-rays our practice follows the Standard of Care that has been established by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Dental Society.

Occasionally we have parents who will not allow us to take dental x-rays on their children. We are able to work with parents in those situations over a period of time. We will provide education and discuss why it is important to ultimately include x-rays as a part of a full evaluation for your child.

Our policy regarding refusal of radiographs / x-rays is as follows:

Once your child has been with us for a period of 18 months, if we have not established a level of trust with you that allows the doctor to work within the standard of care, we will help you find another dental home for your child.

Our standard is to obtain 'bitewing' images at least once a year, and a 'panorex' once every three to five years. When a patient has a history of caries (tooth decay leading to cavities), we will advise x-rays to be taken at every six month cleaning appointment until there are at least two consecutive exams without decay noted.

Our office follows the ADA recommendations for using "as low as reasonably achievable" (ALARA) exposure to radiation. Along with our equipment, our safety procedures include using a digital process and providing a protective apron with a thyroid collar. Our digital x-ray systems lowers the traditional x-ray dose by about 90% compared traditional x-ray equipment, well below the recommended levels. The average child is exposed to more radiation each day just from their natural surroundings. We will do our best to accommodate our patient's needs and address any concerns you may have.

While x-rays are diagnostic in nature, they are also a preventative measure, helping to spot issues before they become major problems. An examination of your child's teeth without an x-ray may not reveal potential issues with the teeth and surrounding tissue. Common problems that will go undiagnosed are: decay between the teeth, decay inside the teeth, bone infection, abscesses, missing teeth, extra teeth, impacted teeth, cysts, a variety of genetic or systemic problems, and in rare cases tumors or cancers. The Discovery of these problems at an early stage is vital for an effective plan of treatment.

Without x-rays, issues not obviously apparent could go undiagnosed, resulting in progressive worsening, even to the extent of threatening your child's overall health. Left untreated, an abscess infection can spread to other parts of the body, including the lungs, heart, and brain.

In the event that a family opts out of taking radiographs / x-rays we will require you to complete and sign the following portion of this document.

To maintain our Standard of Care, if a parent or legal guardian does not consent to dental imaging as described above, the signature below of the parent or legal guardian of the patient does hereby:

Acknowledge that Once your child has been with us for a period of 18 months, if we have not established a level of trust with you that allows the doctor to work within the standard of care for radiographs, the doctor / patient relationship will be ended by our practice. We will gladly transfer your child's dental records to another dental practice of your choosing.

Release Southern Smiles of Cary NC, as well as the doctors and staff in the employ thereof, from any and all liability, and hereby assumes full responsibility for all consequences related to the decision to opt out of diagnostic radiographs as doctor recommended.

Patient Legal Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date