

**X-Ray Policy for  
Randolph L. Mitchell, D.M.D.  
Effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

Dentists and Dental Hygienists are mandated to practice according to established standards of care **by law**, by virtue of their licensure. As clinicians we are held to a higher standard and these standards of care include maintaining up-to-date Dental radiographs. It is **our duty** to provide competent, comprehensive care, and radiographs are vital to proper diagnoses. Without the necessary images, we compromise our ability to provide this care. When a patient refuses necessary radiographs, he or she creates a situation that impedes the doctor's ability to diagnose. Dental X-rays or radiographs are one of the best diagnostic tools in dentistry. They allow us to detect problems in the early stage when they cannot be seen by the naked eye – even in dentistry pathology may exist that can be life threatening.

Throughout the years that I have been in practice people have become more and more concerned about overall radiation exposure. In turn there has been a tendency to decline necessary Dental radiographs. This has left me in the position of having to address issues with patients who are astonished to find that they have MAJOR dental problems after years of refusing radiographs and who are wondering “How did this happen”? Part of the reason is that the places we can't see with our eyes are also the places where dental problems start first. These are the areas where bacteria that cause the most severe dental problems live and do their damage - these areas are also the hardest for patients to clean. Radiographs do not PREVENT dental problems but rather allow them to be DETECTED earlier, while there is still a chance to deal with them before they reach the “Catastrophic” Phase.

We use the most modern x-ray technology available today. Because our x-ray machines are digital, your radiation exposure is reduced by about 80-90 percent. When comparing radiation from a digital dental X-ray to basic exposures that occur in our everyday lives, the amount of exposure is minimal, arguably negligible. Contrast this minimal exposure with the risk of not finding a problem until it has become serious and you will understand that prevention is the best medicine.

Of note is the fact that per current FDA guidelines it is no longer necessary to refrain from taking Dental X-rays on pregnant women. We always leave that decision up to the woman and her OB-GYN and we consider X-rays to be “elective” while pregnant.

We NEVER take un-necessary X-rays – In fact treating many dental problems without x-rays would be considered to be substandard care. Patients have more rights than responsibilities and clinicians have more responsibilities than rights. As a patient you always have the right to choose whether or not you will proceed with our recommended treatment, but you have a **limited right** to dictate the terms of your care. This means that you **do not** have a right to consent to substandard treatment. In the “normal” business world, two people can bargain over business matters, but those same bargaining powers **do not** exist in the health-care realm.

**As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 regular X-rays will be REQUIRED for every patient of this office at the ADA / FDA recommended intervals or at other times as deemed necessary for treatment.**

**For most of our patients this means that you will notice no change because you are already compliant with our policy.**

**For others, this will require a change on your part and will mean that you will now be required to get X-rays at regular prescribed intervals if you wish to remain a patient of this office.**

**If you choose to refuse recommended diagnostic radiographs, we have the responsibility to refuse to treat you –This is in your best interest as well as ours.**

**Thank you for your understanding in this matter**

**Randolph L. Mitchell, D.M.D**