



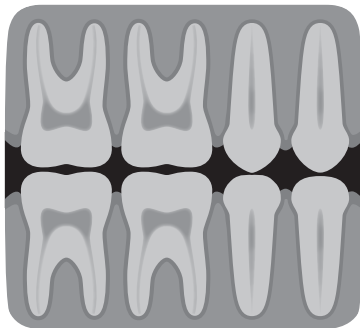
# X-Rays

## What they are:

Having X-rays taken is a painless procedure that uses small amounts of radiation to capture images of your teeth and bones. Because your dentist takes precautions and the amount of radiation used is so small, there is very little health risk involved. The images can be digital or on regular film. X-rays are often taken to better investigate dental issues that may not be readily visible to the naked eye such as cavities between teeth. Your dentist should always examine your mouth before ordering any X-rays.

## Why you might need one:

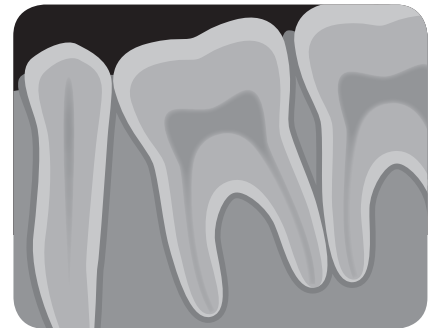
If you don't have many oral health problems and aren't at high risk for cavities or gum disease, you'll probably only have X-rays taken occasionally as part of routine checkups. Patients with a higher risk for cavities or a history of gum disease may need X-rays more frequently. The type of X-ray needed depends on the area of the mouth your dentist wants to review. Typically, a series of X-rays that looks at all of your teeth (full mouth series) or a single film that shows all of your teeth and jaw bones (panoramic film) are only needed once every five or more years.



Bitewing



Panoramic



Periapical



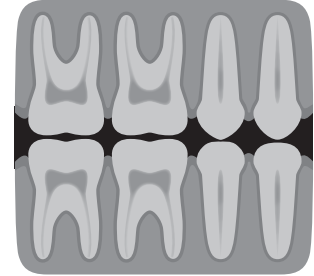
Full Mouth Survey



# X-Rays: Bitewing

## What they are:

Decay often forms between your teeth. Because cavities in spaces such as these can be hard to spot with the naked eye, bitewing X-rays are designed to show your dentist the spaces between teeth, especially between upper and lower molars. These images can also help detect any bone loss between your teeth due to periodontal disease. These films may be taken annually or every few years, depending on your history of dental problems and your current risk.



## How they work:

### Step 1

Most of the time, you'll be seated in a dental chair while the X-rays are taken.



### Step 2

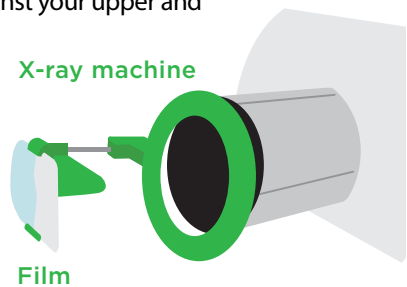
Your dentist or technician will place a heavy lead apron over your chest, midsection and the front of your neck to help block radiation from your thyroid gland and other parts of your body.

### Step 3

You will be asked to bite down on a piece of plastic that holds the X-ray film against your upper and lower teeth.

### Step 4

The X-ray machine will be placed near your face, aiming at the film you're holding in your mouth. Your dentist or technician will press a button to take the X-ray, and may need to leave the room to do so.



### Step 5

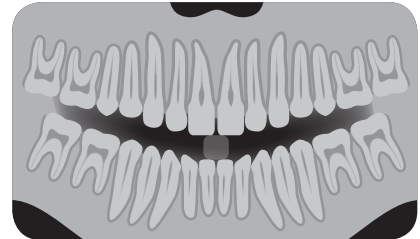
The X-ray film is developed or, in the case of digital X-rays, viewed immediately on a computer screen. Your dentist will review the images and share any findings with you during your appointment.



# X-Rays: Panoramic

## What they are:

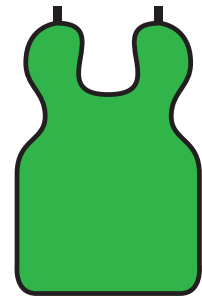
Just as panoramic photographs show a wider perspective, panoramic X-rays (or panos) give dentists a broad view of the entire mouth. Panos can show dentists wisdom teeth growth and position as well as problems in the jaw bone.



## How they work:

### Step 1

Your dentist or technician will place a radiation-blocking lead apron on your upper body.



### Step 2

He or she will help you properly sit or stand in the middle of the X-ray machine.

### Step 3

In order to maintain teeth alignment, you'll bite down on a "bite blocker" attached to the machine. This helps keep the resulting image clear.

### Step 4

Once you are positioned correctly, your dentist or technician will start the X-ray and may need to leave the room to do so. A rotating arm on the machine will make a semi-circle around your head, recording images from all angles to capture a comprehensive view of your mouth. The X-ray can take up to 20 seconds.



### Step 5

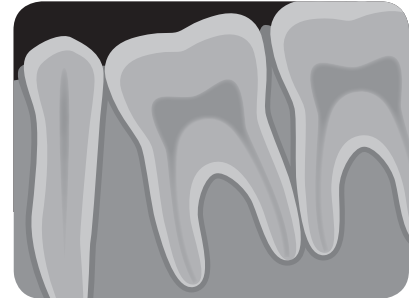
The X-ray image will be developed. If the panoramic film was taken digitally, it will be viewed on a computer screen. Your dentist will review the image and share any findings with you during your appointment.



# X-Rays: Periapical

## What they are:

Periapical X-rays allow your dentist to look at an entire tooth, including the roots. They're most often taken during your first dental visit to give your dentist a thorough look at each tooth and the surrounding bone structure.



## How they work:

### Step 1

As with other X-rays, your dentist or technician will cover your upper body with a lead apron.



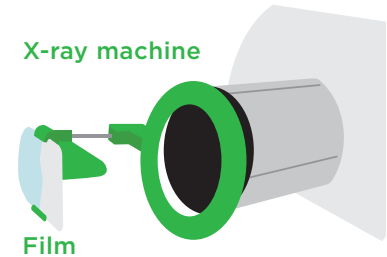
### Step 2

Film will be placed in your mouth using a metal rod with a ring attached to it. For the X-rays to provide a clear image of your tooth, you'll need to bite firmly onto the device to keep the film in place. It may feel a little awkward or uncomfortable, but not painful.

### Step 3

Your dentist or technician will position the X-ray machine near your face, aiming it toward the film in your mouth.

X-ray machine



Film

### Step 4

Your dentist or technician will press a button to complete the X-ray and may need to leave the room to do so. This may be repeated depending on how many teeth need to be inspected.

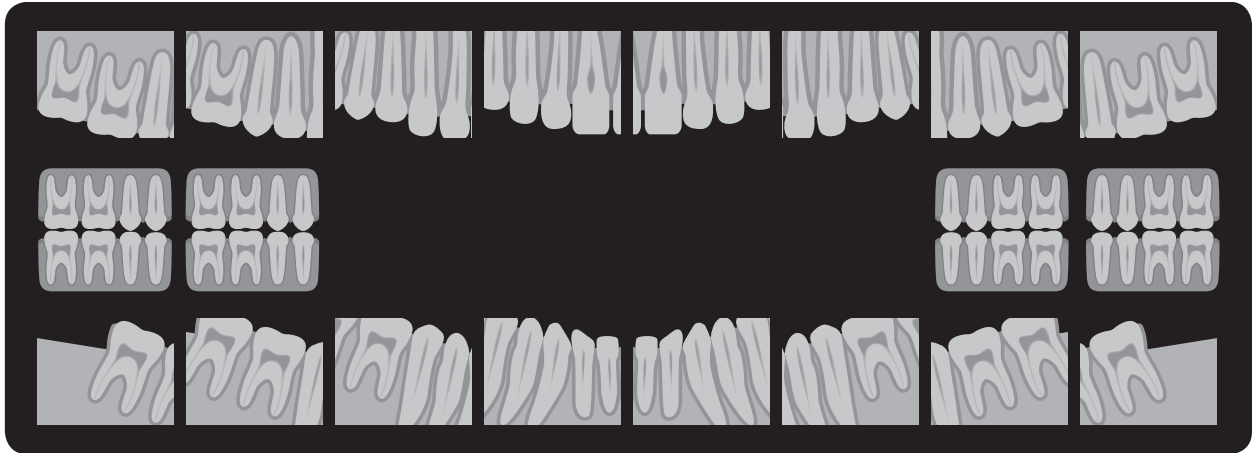
### Step 5

As with other X-rays, the film will be developed or viewed on a computer screen if they were taken digitally. Your dentist will review the images and share any findings with you during your appointment.



# X-Rays: Full Mouth Survey

(FMS or FMX)



## What it is:

A full mouth survey is a complete set of X-rays that covers your entire mouth, including all teeth and surrounding areas, by combining bitewing, periapical and/or panoramic X-rays. These full X-rays aren't necessary for most patients, but when they are required, the procedure is the same as described for the other types of X-rays. Usually, full mouth series are only needed at an initial screening or when there is a history of cysts or tumors (jaw pathology); significant dental work such as root canals, extractions and gum disease treatment; or for specific purposes such as wisdom tooth or orthodontic evaluation.