**Guidelines for Prescribing Dental Radiographs**

The recommendations in this chart are subject to clinical judgment and may not apply to every patient. They are to be used by dentists only after reviewing the patient’s health history and completing a clinical examination. Because every precaution should be taken to minimize radiation exposure, protective thyroid collars and aprons should be used whenever possible. This practice is strongly recommended for children, women of childbearing age, and pregnant women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Encounter</th>
<th>Patient Age and Dental Developmental Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child with Primary Dentition (prior to eruption of first permanent tooth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New patient* being evaluated for dental diseases and dental development</td>
<td>Individualized radiographic exam consisting of selected periapical/occusal views and/or posterior bitewings if proximal surfaces cannot be visualized or probed. Patients without evidence of disease and with open proximal contacts may not require a radiographic exam at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall patient* with clinical caries or at increased risk for caries**</td>
<td>Posterior bitewing exam at 6–12 month intervals if proximal surfaces cannot be examined visually or with a probe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall patient* with no clinical caries and not at increased risk for caries**</td>
<td>Posterior bitewing exam at 12–24 month intervals if proximal surfaces cannot be examined visually or with a probe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall patient* with periodontal disease</td>
<td>Clinical judgment as to need for and type of radiographic images for evaluation of periodontal disease. Imaging may consist of, but is not limited to, selected bitewing and/or periapical images of areas where periodontal disease (other than nonspecific gingivitis) can be identified clinically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient for monitoring of growth and development</td>
<td>Clinical judgment as to need for and type of radiographic images for evaluation and/or monitoring of dentofacial growth and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIBING DENTAL RADIOGRAPHS

#### Patient Age and Dental Developmental Stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Encounter</th>
<th>Child with Primary Dentition (prior to eruption of first permanent tooth)</th>
<th>Child with Transitional Dentition (after eruption of first permanent tooth)</th>
<th>Adolescent with Permanent Dentition (prior to eruption of third molars)</th>
<th>Adult, Dentate or Partially Edentulous</th>
<th>Adult, Edentulous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>Clinical judgment as to need for and type of radiographic images for evaluation and/or monitoring in these circumstances.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Clinical situations for which radiographs may be indicated include but are not limited to:**

**A. Positive Historical Findings**
1. Previous periodontal or endodontic treatment
2. History of pain or trauma
3. Familial history of dental anomalies
4. Postoperative evaluation of healing
5. Remineralization monitoring
6. Presence of implants or evaluation for implant placement
7. Mobility of teeth
8. Sinus tract (“fistula”)  
9. Clinically suspected sinus pathology
10. Growth abnormalities
11. Oral involvement in known or suspected systemic disease
12. Positive neurologic findings in the head and neck
13. Evidence of foreign objects
14. Pain and/or dysfunction of the temporomandibular joint
15. Facial asymmetry
16. Abutment teeth for fixed or removable partial prosthesis
17. Unexplained bleeding
18. Unexplained sensitivity of teeth
19. Unusual eruption, spacing, or migration of teeth
20. Unusual tooth morphology, calcification, or color
21. Unexplained absence of teeth
22. Clinical erosion

**B. Positive Clinical Signs/Symptoms**
1. Clinical evidence of periodontal disease
2. Large or deep restorations
3. Deep cavities
4. Malposed or clinically impacted teeth
5. Swelling
6. Evidence of dental/facial trauma
7. Mobility of teeth

**Factors increasing risk for caries may include but are not limited to:**
1. High level of caries experience or demineralization
2. History of recurrent caries
3. High titers of cariogenic bacteria
4. Existing restoration(s) of poor quality
5. Poor oral hygiene
6. Inadequate fluoride exposure
7. Prolonged nursing (bottle or breast)
8. Frequent high sucrose content in diet
9. Poor family dental health
10. Developmental or acquired enamel defects
11. Developmental or acquired disability
12. Xerostomia
13. Genetic abnormality of teeth
14. Many multishelf restorations
15. Chemo/radiation therapy
16. Eating disorders
17. Drug/alcohol abuse
18. Irregular dental care