

Nervous about X-rays...

Information for the patient



DOON SOUTH DENTAL
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**Anxiety about x-rays is understandable. Information is usually the answer.
Here are our answers to the most common concerns:**

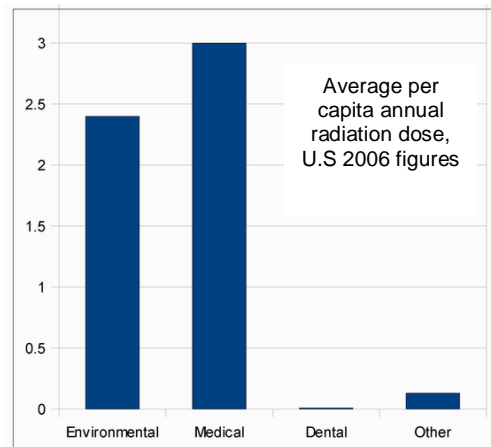
I don't like radiation.

Unfortunately being alive on the earth means constant exposure to ionizing radiation (the kind that causes cancer) - it's in ultraviolet sunlight, in the air, given off by building materials, and in cosmic rays from space. What matters is the dose. Check the chart below: the average person in the U.S. or Canada receives **700 times** as much ionizing radiation from the environment and medical procedures as from dental x-rays. (*reference available*).

Table 11
Estimated Annual Per-Capita Effective Doses from Various Sources in the United States for Selected Years

Source	Dose for 1980-1982*	Dose for 2006†
All	3.0	5.6‡
Natural background§	2.4	2.4
Inhalation	1.24	1.26
Terrestrial	0.41	0.48
Cosmic	0.35	0.39
Internal	0.38	0.27
Medical procedures	0.54	3.0
All radiologic procedures	0.39	2.24
Radiographic and fluoroscopic procedures	0.36	0.33
CT scanning	0.016	1.47
Interventional procedures	0.018	0.43
Dental radiographic examinations	NA	0.008
Nuclear medicine studies	0.14	0.77
Occupational exposures	0.009	0.005¶
Nuclear power	0.0005	<0.0001
Consumer products and miscellaneous origins	0.05-0.13	0.13*

Note.—The per-capita effective dose is in millisieverts. NA = not available.
* Data are from reference 8.
† Data are from reference 14.
‡ Value is an approximate dose.
§ Determined by using the UNSCEAR value for natural background, from reference 15.
¶ Major components included medical, 39%; aviation, 38%; commercial nuclear power, 8%; industry and commerce, 8%; education and research, 4%; and government and military, 3%.
* Major components included cigarette smoking, 35%; building materials, 27%; commercial air travel, 26%; mining and agriculture, 6%; and fossil fuel combustion, 2%.



Nothing's bothering me

That's great, and we want to keep it that way. Most people who have strokes, high blood pressure, cancer, or dental disease feel nothing until it's too late. We need to find it early.

I don't want to take any chances.

That's also not really an option for any of us. The reason x-rays are used at all is that they find disease. In dentistry, most of the conditions diagnosed by x-rays are otherwise undetectable. These include decay, bone disease, early abscesses, periodontal (gum) disease, cysts, fractures, impacted or missing teeth, orthodontic problems, and tumours.

I don't like to have any unnecessary x-rays.

Good - we don't either. Dentists and radiologists have been trained for many years to follow the principle known as ALARA: "As Low As Reasonably Achievable". This Prime Directive of radiology means that we take the minimal number of x-rays films to diagnose and treat the patient safely. This is standard operating procedure - we never suggest or take unnecessary x-rays.

I just had a lot of medical x-rays.

Dental x-rays are generally insignificant in comparison to medical x-rays.

I don't care; I just want to take my chances without x-rays.

That's your choice, of course. But it does raise ethical and legal problems for our office. Taking appropriate x-rays is the Standard of Care—failure to take adequate x-rays is malpractice. We respect your beliefs, but if you want to have ongoing care without adequate x-rays, Dr. Hendry can't be your dentist.

Can't I just sign a waiver that I don't want x-rays?

No - for the same reason that you can't sign a waiver absolving your doctor of responsibility for not listening to your heart, (or your restaurant for giving you food poisoning from unsanitary conditions). We're not allowed to do negligent dentistry - even if the patient asks for it. (And as a good and conscientious dentist, I don't want to.) The only option for a patient who insists on treatment with no x-rays is to try to find a dentist who is willing to take the risks with you - and good dentists won't.

It's the patient's choice, of course, but we hope this helps. If you're comfortable driving your car here and walking outside in the sunlight, there's really no reason to be afraid of the occasional dental x-ray.

But Dr. Oz said.....

Oh, brother. Dr. Oz is a heart surgeon with a healthy ego—and apparently little clue about teeth or dentistry. He also says eating raisins cleans your teeth—about the worst dental advice we've ever heard. We promise not to give you advice about heart surgery, but **please** do not listen to this man about your teeth.

X-rays Show Hidden Problems

Decay, broken roots, defects in fillings that can damage the gums, impacted teeth, extra teeth, abscesses, cysts in the jaws tumours and more. These are not from a textbook; all of these x-rays show common problems, and all came from our own patients.

We can't work blind—it's just not safe. That's why we use x-rays

Dr. Hendry and Staff

