

HYGIENIST: PATIENT REFUSING X-RAYS

Important Frequently Asked Questions

Remember – each office is different! Our documents are intended as suggestions and guidelines only and can be used as a starting point for conversation and your own system development.

Below we have a list of important ‘frequently asked questions’ about X-Rays, as stated from the attached video. We hope you can utilize this to learn more about X-Rays within the office and how to explain the necessity of X-Rays to patients.

1.) *Why are X-Rays important?*

X-Rays are vital because they allow us to see into the tooth. One can only see so much with the naked eye and X-Rays can show us so much more. This can include interproximal decay or the root of the tooth and any deep cavities. If a patient is having any sort of pain, X-Rays can give the dentist a much bigger insight into what is going on. X-Rays also serve as a diagnostic tool for dentists. Past the clinical side, offices also use the X-Rays to send to insurance to make sure that the insurance company pays their share of any treatment needed.

2.) *When can we compromise with our patients’ requests?*

In some scenarios we can compromise with our patients and allow them to not get X-Rays in the appointment. However, as explained thoroughly in the video, it is on a patient to patient basis. For instance, the doctor should not compromise with a patient who is having pain but doesn’t want X-Rays. However, if someone is very afraid of exposure to radiation due to past experience, or family history, and they have recent X-Rays, and a history of good oral health, then this would be a good time to compromise, and allow the patient to wait until their next appointment. It ultimately comes down to each scenario, each patient, why and when they do not want X-Rays and if they are willing to compromise with you as well.

3.) *What can you explain to patients who might not want X-Rays due to exposure?*

You can explain to the patient that you understand their fear, however, dental X-Rays are proven to be one of the lowest forms of radiation dosages. It is so low dose that the hygienist doesn’t actually even leave the room anymore. You can explain to the patient that they actually receive more radiation stepping outside on a sunny day than receiving X-Rays at the dental office. That dental X-Rays are now considered safe for patients to receive.

4.) *How can you ease patients worries regarding money of X-Rays?*

You can explain to the patient that most insurance companies do cover a good amount of the cost of X-Rays. However, for patients paying out of pocket you can let them know that the price of a set of X-Rays are low, and you do not receive X-Rays at every appointment, so this will not be a frequent expense. That being said, long term speaking, if the X-Rays are not taken and something is wrong, it will progress into something that will cost exponentially more than it would if it was found soon.

5.) *What can we do to help patients worried about the extra time of taking X-Rays?*

You can insure the patient that the hygienists do this every day and are very fast. That the time it takes to do a full set of X-Rays is actually scheduled into the appointment time, and that they will get them out of the office on time.