

# Ask “Is This X-Ray Really Necessary?”



Most of the time X-rays are necessary, but it's up to the patient to question them anyway. You must stay alert to the possibility of being exposed to harmful levels of radiation through unnecessary X-rays, both medical and dental. The risks of overexposure can include sterility, birth defects, and the development of cancer in certain sensitive tissues.

If you're pregnant, or even suspect you might be, further precautions become even more imperative. Dental X-rays might be postponed or, if a medical X-ray is needed, a lead shield should cover the abdominal and pelvic area. Ask your doctor if an ultrasound examination might substitute.

If you have switched to another doctor or dentist, it's not always necessary to start fresh with new X-rays. Have your previous X-ray records sent to the new office.