**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>Patient Category</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Adolescent</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Edentulous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Dentition</strong> (prior to first permanent tooth)</td>
<td>Posterior bitewings if proximal surfaces cannot be visualized or probed</td>
<td>Individualized radiographic exam consisting of posterior bitewings with panoramic exam or posterior bitewings</td>
<td>Individualized radiographic exam consisting of posterior bitewings with panoramic exam or posterior bitewings and selected periapical images. A full mouth intraoral radiographic exam is preferred when the patient has clinical evidence of generalized dental disease or history</td>
<td>Individualized radiographic exam, based on clinical signs and symptoms.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transitional Dentition</strong> (after first permanent tooth)</td>
<td>Posterior bitewing exam at 6-12 month intervals if proximal surfaces cannot be examined visually or with a probe</td>
<td>Posterior bitewing exam at 12-24 month intervals if proximal surfaces cannot be examined visually or with a probe</td>
<td>Posterior bitewing exam at 18-36 month intervals</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td><strong>Periapical</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Periodontal disease</strong></td>
<td>Clinical judgment as to the need for and type of radiographic images for the evaluation of periodontal disease. Imaging may consist of, but not limited to, selected bitewing and/or periapical images of areas where periodontal disease (other than nonspecific gingivitis) can be identified clinically.</td>
<td>Usually not indicated</td>
<td>Usually not indicated</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Growth and development assessment</strong></td>
<td>Clinical judgment as to the need for and type of radiographic images for evaluation and/or monitoring of dentofacial growth and development</td>
<td>Panoramic or periapical exam to assess developing third molars</td>
<td>Usually not indicated</td>
<td>Usually not indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient with other circumstances including, but not limited to, proposed or existing implants, pathology, restorative/endodontic needs, treated periodontal disease and caries remineralization</strong></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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**Clinical situations for which radiographs may be indicated include but are not limited to:**

**A. Positive Historical Findings**
- Previous periodontal or endodontic treatment
- History of pain or trauma
- Familial history of dental anomalies
- Postoperative evaluation of healing
- Remineralization monitoring
- Presence of implants or evaluation for implant placement

**B. Positive Clinical Signs/Symptoms**
- Clinical evidence of periodontal disease
- Large or deep restorations
- Deep carious lesions

**Factors increasing risk for caries may include but are not limited to:**
- High level of caries experience or demineralization
- History of recurrent caries
- High titers of cariogenic bacteria
- Existing restoration(s) of poor quality
- Poor oral hygiene
- Inadequate fluoride exposure
- Prolonged nursing (bottle or breast)
- Frequent high sucrose content in diet
- Poor family dental health
- Developmental or acquired enamel defects
- Developmental or acquired disability
- Xerostomia
- Genetic abnormality of teeth
- Many multisurface restorations
- Chemo/radiation therapy
- Eating disorders
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Irregular dental care