



# Oregon

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## Clarification on Radiographs

**The Oregon Board of Dentistry (Board) regularly receives questions about the requirement for radiographs/X-rays and how often they are required.**

The decision about whether and/or when to take radiographs is the responsibility of Oregon licensed dental professionals, including Dentists, Dental Therapists, or an Expanded Practice Permit Dental Hygienist. It should be based on factors including the patient's oral health, patient's age, the risk for disease, and any sign or symptoms of oral disease that a patient may be experiencing.

The Oregon Board of Dentistry does not have a time requirement for how often radiographs or X-rays are to be taken. So, if your Dentist says we (the Board) require X-rays every six months or every year, that is not true.

**The dental professional uses their professional judgment to decide when radiographic imaging is clinically indicated, not the patient.**

Dental radiographs are an important diagnostic tool to assist your dental professional in treatment planning, and it is the responsibility of the treating dental professional to determine how often they are needed.

The Board takes the following into consideration when it reviews care provided by our licensees:

**Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 679.140(4) states:**

"In determining what constitutes unacceptable patient care, the board may take into account all relevant factors and practices, including but not limited to the practices generally and currently followed and accepted by persons licensed to practice Dentistry in this state, the current teachings at accredited dental schools, relevant technical reports published in recognized dental journals, and the desirability of reasonable experimentation in the furtherance of the dental arts."

In order to diagnose dental pathology and complete an adequate examination on a new or existing patient, the dental professional must have adequate dental radiographs, periodontal probings (if appropriate), and a current medical history. If pathology is diagnosed during the dental examination, the dental professional is obligated to explain the problem, the treatment options, the risks of providing or not providing the treatment, and answer questions. The dental professional is also required to document in the patient's records any dental pathology that is diagnosed during the examination.

When treatment is provided, the dental professional is expected to have obtained the patient's informed consent prior to providing the treatment. **Patients may choose to refuse diagnostic tests, dental radiographs, or recommended treatment. A dentist is not obligated to treat a patient who does not agree with a treatment plan, including X-rays.** The Board cannot mandate that dental professionals provide unacceptable patient care, and the Board cannot force a licensee to provide treatment for a patient if, in their professional judgement, they do not have the ability to obtain an accurate dental diagnosis or dental justification for treatment.