

Dental Radiography

- Dental radiography is painless, very safe, and noninvasive.
- Dental radiography is useful for evaluating tooth roots and surrounding bone.
- Sedation or anesthesia is necessary so that your pet can be properly positioned for dental radiography.

What Is Dental Radiography?

A radiograph (sometimes called an *x-ray*) is a type of photograph that reveals the body's bones and internal organs. The procedure for obtaining a radiograph is called *radiography*. Dental radiography involves obtaining x-ray images of the mouth, teeth, and jaws. Radiography is painless, safe, and completely noninvasive.

When Is Dental Radiography Recommended?

Dental radiographs are generally obtained during a routine dental examination and cleaning. However, in cases of facial trauma or head trauma, dental radiographs may be taken to assess the extent of damage to the mouth, teeth, and jaws.

Dental radiographs can help your veterinarian evaluate the health of tooth roots and identify a variety of problems that are not visible just by looking at your pet's teeth, including:

- Tumors involving the bones of the jaw
- Tooth impactions (teeth that are wedged in or can't erupt normally)
- Tooth fractures
- Tooth root abscesses
- Retained teeth (teeth that failed to erupt at the proper time)
- Feline resorptive lesions (painful erosions on the tooth surface)

Because sedation is required for obtaining dental x-rays, your veterinarian may recommend blood work and other preanesthetic testing before taking dental radiographs of your pet. Sedation is needed so that your pet can be properly positioned for the radiographs to be taken. During the dental radiography procedure, your pet will be monitored closely to ensure a safe recovery from sedation.

Dental radiography generally takes only a few minutes. Some veterinarians use traditional dental radiography equipment, whereas other practices use digital radiography equipment. After examining the radiographs, your veterinarian can identify problem teeth or other issues that may need to be addressed during the dental cleaning. Veterinarians also use radiographs after procedures such as tooth extractions to confirm that all the tooth roots have been removed.

Sedation or anesthesia is necessary so that your pet can be properly positioned for dental radiography.

What Are the Benefits and Risks of Dental Radiography?

Dental radiography has many benefits and very minimal risks. It is very safe, completely painless, and noninvasive. It is available in many veterinary practices and generally takes only a few minutes.

The risks associated with dental radiography are minimal. Because the level of radiation exposure needed to perform radiography is very low, even pregnant females and very young pets can undergo radiography. In the vast majority of cases, the benefits of performing dental radiography far outweigh any possible risks. Dental radiography is a valuable tool for your veterinarian because it can provide important information about the health of your pet's teeth and gums.