

Why Should a Child Have a Panoramic X-Ray?

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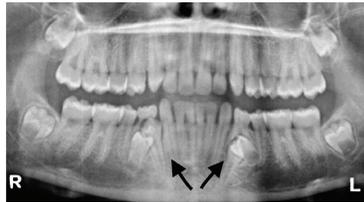


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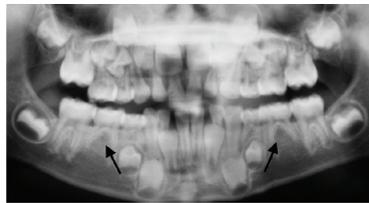
Any x-ray taken on a person should have a good reason or reasons for taking it in the first place. A panoramic x-ray shows all of the teeth and goes around the head during the exposure. We generally recommend that this be done on children at about 7 or 8 years of age. So... why should a child have this procedure done?

There are several things that dentists look for in a panoramic x-ray. I'll list some of them and show a couple of examples.

First, as on adults, the dentist is looking for pathological conditions, such as cysts and tumors, as well as evaluating the bone level that support the teeth.



Secondly, the dentist checks if the child has any extra teeth. Extra teeth can block the normal eruption of permanent teeth and cause impaction. Some of the impactions (and possible surgical/orthodontic care) can be prevented by removal of the extra tooth. The arrows in the picture point to extra teeth that are preventing eruption of permanent bicuspids.



The dentist also looks for missing teeth. It can be helpful to know about missing teeth early for planning purposes. The arrows in the picture point to the areas of missing permanent teeth.



The dentist also reviews the direction teeth are coming in. Some teeth can start coming in the wrong way and early intervention oftentimes can prevent impaction of these teeth and surgical/orthodontic procedures. The following pictures show an upper cuspid that was impacting. With early extraction of the baby cuspid, the permanent cuspid is erupting into a better position.

Of course there are many other conditions that are checked in a panoramic x-ray, but hopefully, this has given you a better idea why this procedure is valuable.

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