

# Cleanings & Prevention

Dental Exams & Cleanings

## Dental Exam

A comprehensive dental exam will be performed by Dr. Kaminski.

- **Examination of diagnostic x-rays (radiographs):** Essential for detection of decay, tumors, cysts, and bone loss. X-rays also help determine tooth and root positions.
- **Oral cancer screening:** Check the face, neck, lips, tongue, throat, tissues, and gums for any signs of oral cancer.
- **Gum disease evaluation:** Check the gums and bone around the teeth for any signs of periodontal disease.
- **Examination of tooth decay:** All tooth surfaces will be checked for decay with special dental instruments.
- **Examination of existing restorations:** Check current fillings, crowns, etc.

## Professional Dental Cleaning

- **Removal of calculus (tartar):** Calculus is hardened plaque that has been left on the tooth for some time and is now firmly attached to the tooth surface. Calculus forms above and below the gum line and can only be removed with special dental instruments.
- **Removal of plaque:** Plaque is a sticky, almost invisible film that forms on the teeth. It is a growing colony of living bacteria, food debris, and saliva. The bacteria produce toxins (poisons) that inflame the gums. This inflammation is the start of periodontal disease!
- **Teeth polishing:** Remove stain and plaque that is not otherwise removed during tooth brushing and scaling.

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Dental radiographs (x-rays) are essential, preventative, diagnostic tools that provide valuable information not visible during a regular dental exam. Dr. Kaminski will use this information to safely and accurately detect hidden dental abnormalities and complete an accurate treatment plan. Without x-rays, problem areas may go undetected.

## Dental x-rays may reveal:

- Abscesses or cysts.
- Bone loss.
- Cancerous and non-cancerous tumors.
- Decay between the teeth.
- Developmental abnormalities.
- Poor tooth and root positions.
- Problems inside a tooth or below the gum line.

Detecting and treating dental problems at an early stage can save you time, money, unnecessary discomfort, and your teeth!

## Are dental x-rays safe?

We are all exposed to natural radiation in our environment. The amount of radiation exposure from a full mouth series of x-rays is equal to the amount a person receives in a single day from natural sources.

Dental x-rays produce a very low level of radiation and are considered safe. Dr. Kaminski takes necessary precautions to limit the patient's exposure to radiation when taking dental x-rays. These precautions include inspection and calibration of each unit regularly and using modern, extra fast film that cuts down the exposure time of each x-ray.

## How often should dental x-rays be taken?

The need for dental x-rays depends on each patient's *individual* dental health needs. Dr. Kaminski will recommend necessary x-rays based on the review of your medical and dental history, dental exam, signs and symptoms, age consideration, and risk for disease.

A *full mouth series* of dental x-rays is recommended for new patients. A full series is usually good for three to five years. *Bite-wing x-rays* (x-rays of top and bottom teeth biting together) are taken at recall (check-up) visits and are recommended once year to detect new dental problems.