

Featured

X-rays and safety

Last month a new study was published in the American Cancer Society's journal *Cancer* which highlighted links between dental X-rays and one of the most common types of brain tumours, meningioma. This study caused quite a stir when it was published on page three of the *Australian Newspaper* on the 11th April with the headline 'Dental X-rays Cause Brain Cancer'.

So what is the risk?

No source of radiation is good for you—this includes what comes in from the sun. Dental X-rays are considered the most common source of 'artificial' radiation although they only account for 3% of the total radiation dose received each year.

The Australian Dental Association made a comment on the study and the use of dental X-rays last week on its website. It

stated that it is important to note that dental

technology has improved markedly over the years significantly decreasing the risk to patients treated today. "It is likely that most of the patients from the study received their exposure to dental radiation many decades ago, when exposure was likely to be much higher and unfocused on the region of interest."

It also added that the present day dental X-ray films are much faster and therefore require much less radiation exposure, while digital X-Ray systems reduce exposure by up to 80-90% compared to conventional films. So if you had a choice; digital X-rays are the best of a bad lot!

We did some quick calculations and worked out that the dose from the digital X-rays at Bite Dental is equivalent to 1/64th the dose of the study and because of our lead focusing it was equivalent to the background

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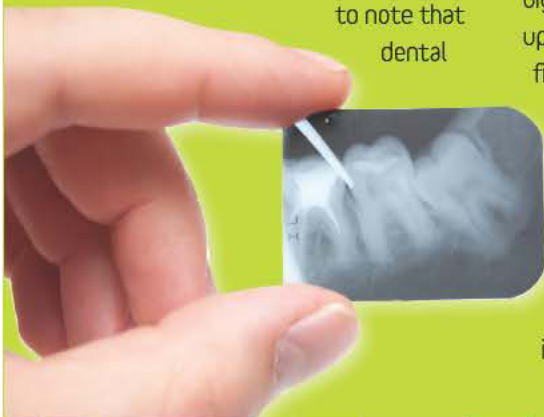
This month...

In response to an alarming article on X-rays published in the Australian Newspaper—this month's feature article takes a closer look at the facts surrounding today's technology

Also, more questions keep being asked regarding health funds, means testing and how that applies to people in different circumstances. Check out our Community section for more.

Lastly, I share a question posed to me at the Diabetes Australia Conference in our Handy Hints section.

Dr Simon Franks



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radiation received on a one way flight to Sydney for a 2x3cm part of your body!

So what links did the study find?

After surveying 1400 cancer patients there seems to be an increased incidence of brain cancer later in life if children under 10 years of age have multiple bitewing radiographs every six months. Adults also had an increased risk if they had multiple X-rays taken more frequently than every six months.

However this link is based on what cancer patients could recall of their dental treatments and X-ray frequency over the course of their lives—often many years previously.

It is interesting to note that the frequency reported above far and away exceeds the dental X-ray recommendations set by the Australian dental board. Dentists should 'assess the clinical need for each patient prior to taking X-rays' with an 'average' frequency of around two years for each patient.

But the question remains - how often did you have dental X-rays when you were 10 years old?



Community

John Small Health Advisory

Many of our patients have benefited from the advice given by John Small Health Advisory regarding value for money from their health insurance or fund. The Government is introducing means-testing of the Health Insurance Rebate from 1st July this year which could adversely affect anyone with a taxable income exceeding \$83,000 single or \$166,000 for couple or family.

There is an option of waiving the means-testing for anyone who pays their Health Insurance premiums in advance for financial year 2012/13. Some health funds will allow you to pay up to two years in advance.

Payment must be received by Health Funds by 25th June this year. Please contact Shaun if this interests you as it may save you a few hundred dollars in tax shaun@jsha.com.au or 3010 3454.

Handy hint

Keep it fresh

“ I was asked a question last month at the Diabetes convention—“My dentist told me to take my false teeth out at night, do I really need to?”

The pink plastic on a denture is actually porous and contains many small holes that allow bacteria to live and grow- that's why we recommend to take them out and soak them in a different 'environment' to your mouth to kill them off.

Think of it this way - If you wore your socks and shoes for weeks on end without taking them off would your feet be all nice and fresh!?”



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Celebrate everyday heros. Let us know if you have a cause you'd like us to shout about.