



## North Bay Animal Hospital

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## The Importance of Dental X-rays in Cats

### How are dental x-rays taken in cats?

Dental x-rays in cats are similar to those taken in humans. An x-ray machine using small amounts of radiation is used to “see” the inside of your cat’s teeth and those areas below the gum line that are hidden from view.

Unlike humans, cats need to be under general anesthesia for dental x-rays.

### Why is it important for my cat to have his teeth x-rayed?

Cats cannot simply tell us when their teeth are diseased, and some cats never show that they’re in pain. In many cases, x-rays are the only way for a veterinarian to know your cat has a dental problem that can be treated, relieving discomfort.

Cleaning a cat’s teeth without x-rays often results in missed opportunities to improve the quality of life and health of your cat.



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### How often should my cat’s teeth be x-rayed?

Cats need an oral examination under anesthesia whenever there are missing, discolored or fractured teeth, swollen and inflamed gums, oral growths, and bad breath. Even without any of these signs, cats need to have their mouths x-rayed at least once every year. Remember, one human year is the same as 5-7 cat years. People routinely have dental x-rays at least every other year.



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### Must my cat be anesthetized for x-rays?

Yes, cats have 30 teeth that will be x-rayed. They need to be still during the oral assessment, treatment and prevention procedures. Without anesthesia, the x-ray sensor would not be accurately placed. Thanks to the patient assessment, anesthesia is tailored specifically for your dog and closely monitored during procedures – it's considered to be very safe.



### Should I be concerned about excessive radiation?

No. Veterinarians use only a small amount of radiation to take dental x-rays. There are no reports of adverse radiation effects in cats from this very small amount of exposure.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Jan Bellows, DVM, Dipl. AVDC, ABVP*

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