

February 16, 2015

Dear Editor,

“Overexposed,” published in the Consumer Reports March print issue and posted online since Jan. 27 contains misleading dental x-ray information.

According to the article, “Most people can actually go 24-36 months between bitewings and up to 10 years between a full mouth series.” No source was attributed to that statement, and it does not reflect dental x-ray recommendations developed by the American Dental Association (ADA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Dentists use x-rays to help diagnose damage and disease that is not visible during a regular dental exam. There is no universal recommendation regarding the interval between dental x-rays. How often X-rays should be taken depends on your present oral health, your age, your risk for disease, and any signs and symptoms of oral disease. Dentists take precautions to ensure that the low level of radiation exposure—both to patients and to dental professionals—is “As Low As Reasonable Achievable” (the ALARA principle).

The ADA encourages dentists and patients to discuss dental treatment recommendations, including the need for x-rays, in order to make informed decisions together. People can also learn more about dental x-rays and good dental health habits on [MouthHealthy.org](http://MouthHealthy.org).

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