**DENTAL IMAGING FAQs**

*What is an OPG?*

An orthopantomogram (OPG) and cephalogram are types of digital x-rays. They are performed using a special type of x-ray machine which takes a panoramic picture used to determine the position and relationship between the upper and lower jaw.

X-rays are a type of ionising radiation used to take images of the human body. They pass through the body to create a 2D black and white image determined by how many x-rays are absorbed and how many pass through.

*Are x-rays safe?*

The doctor who has requested your OPG has done so with the knowledge that the benefits of finding a diagnosis outweigh any harm from the small doses of radiation used. The medical imaging technologist who performs your x-rays is highly trained in the ‘ALARA principle’, which stands for ‘as low as reasonably achievable’. This means the lowest radiation dose possible will be used in order to provide diagnostic images for our radiologist to review.

More information on ionising radiation and health can be found here:

<http://www.arpansa.gov.au/radiationprotection/Factsheets/is_ionising.cfm>

*Why does the technologist leave the room?*

The medical imaging technologist will leave the room to briefly perform your x-rays (less than 30 seconds) in order to avoid x-ray exposure to themselves, as the cumulative dose of radiation to the technologist who performs multiple x-rays a day over multiple years of their career would be harmful.

*What if I’m pregnant?*

If you are pregnant or think you might be please advise your doctor and the medical imaging technologist before your x-rays. There is risk of radiation damage to the developing foetus and so an alternative test may be recommended. If the x-rays are deemed medically necessary by the doctor, lead shielding can be used to reduce this risk.

*Do I need to get changed?*

In general, you undress whatever part of your body needs examination and will be given a gown to change into as necessary. You may also be asked to remove jewellery, glasses, dentures and other metallic items so they do not show up on the x-ray.

*How long will it take?*

Most examinations take less than 10 minutes.

*How much will it cost?*

All OPGs at Radius are bulk-billed (no cost).

*Can I use my private health insurance?*

Generally speaking, private medical imaging procedures are only covered if you are an inpatient in a private hospital. Please check with your private health provider, as different policies offer different levels of cover.

*Can I bring a relative or friend to my x-ray appointment?*

Yes, however due to safety reasons they will generally be asked to remain outside for the duration of your x-rays. Protective lead gowns are provided to parents who are required to accompany small children for x-ray examinations.

*What happens to my results?*

The x-rays taken are reviewed by our radiologist who is the specialist doctor onsite at Radius. A report is made based on any findings and sent to your doctor within 24-48 hours. Urgent x-rays may be able to be reviewed at the time of your appointment.