

The National Society of Dental Practitioners and the Dentist's Advantage Insurance Program for Dentists

RISK MANAGEMENT ALERT

Radiation safety in dentistry: New recommendations from the ADA

February 5, 2024

The February 1, 2024 issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* [announced](#) that the ADA no longer recommends using thyroid collars on patients during radiographic exams. While the expert panel concluded that thyroid and abdominal shielding during dental imaging is no longer recommended by the ADA, the article notes that dentists must still adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local [regulations](#) regarding the use of ionizing radiation in dentistry.

The panel of experts, composed of general, public health, and pediatric dentists, oral and maxillofacial radiologists, and a patient representative, determined that there is an abundance of evidence that indicates that using modern digital radiography equipment and restricting the beam size only to the area that needs to be imaged better protect patients against radiation exposure to other parts of their body. These recommendations are based on comprehensive review of dental radiation safety research, guidance from national and international agencies, and regulatory standards.

These broadly applicable recommendations aim to help clinicians develop and implement safety practices that will provide optimal diagnostic value while minimizing radiation risks to patients or personnel. Shielding is just one aspect of recommended [safe radiation practices](#) to protect patients from excess radiation. In addition to ADA recommendations for the safe and appropriate use of ionizing radiation in dentistry, dentists and dental practice owners should also consult local and state regulatory agencies for local radiation protection standards.

This is the first ADA recommendation on patient safety since 2012. The complete report can be found online in the February 2024 edition of the *JADA*: [https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177\(23\)00734-1/fulltext](https://jada.ada.org/article/S0002-8177(23)00734-1/fulltext)

Reference

Benavides, E., Krecioch, J. R., Connolly, R. T., Allareddy, T., Buchanan, A., Spelic, D., O'Brien, K. K., Keels, M. A., Mascarenhas, A. K., Duong, M.-L., Aerne-Bowe, M. J., Ziegler, K. M., & Lipman, R. D. (2024). Optimizing radiation safety in dentistry: Clinical recommendations and regulatory considerations. *The Journal of the American Dental Association*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adaj.2023.12.002>

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