

CBCT Imaging at Inspired Orthodontics Frequently Asked Questions

What is a CBCT scan?

CBCT stands for Cone Beam Computed Tomography. Our CBCT creates a highly detailed 3D image of your child's teeth, jaws, and surrounding structures.

Unlike traditional 2D X-rays, this technology allows us to evaluate not just the teeth, but the entire craniofacial system in three dimensions.

Why do you take a CBCT on new patients?

A comprehensive diagnosis requires a complete understanding of how the teeth, jaws, airway, and surrounding structures are developing.

With CBCT imaging, we can evaluate:

- The presence, position, and eruption path of adult teeth
- Jaw growth and skeletal relationships
- The nasal airway, turbinates, and septum
- Sinuses and surrounding anatomy
- Temporomandibular joints (TMJs)
- Bone support around the teeth (periodontal health)
- Adenoids, tonsils, and tongue space
- Palatal shape and width

This level of detail allows us to create a precise, individualized treatment plan—often identifying issues early that cannot be seen on traditional X-rays.

Is the CBCT scan really necessary?

In most cases, yes.

Orthodontic treatment is not just about straightening teeth—it is about guiding healthy growth, supporting airway development, and ensuring long-term stability.

Without 3D imaging, important findings can be missed, such as:

- Impacted or ectopically erupting teeth
- Adult teeth that are inadvertently resorbing adjacent healthy teeth
- Undiagnosed airway limitations including enlarged adenoids and tonsils
- Bone deficiencies around teeth
- TMJ abnormalities

Our goal is to make the best possible decisions upfront, rather than reacting to problems later.

Can we skip the CBCT scan during the comprehensive exam?

We understand that parents want to minimize any unnecessary procedures. If a CBCT is not clinically indicated, we will not take one. However, when it is recommended, it is because the information it provides is critical for safe, accurate diagnosis and treatment planning.

We are always happy to discuss you and your child's teeth and answer any concerns.

How much radiation is involved?

Radiation safety is a top priority in our practice.

We follow the ALARA principle (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) by:

- Using the smallest field of view possible
- Reducing scan time
- Lowering resolution while maintaining diagnostic quality

Because of these precautions:

- The radiation dose is comparable to, and often similar to, a traditional panoramic and cephalometric X-ray combined
- It is significantly lower than a medical CT scan
- It is in the range of everyday background radiation exposure

For perspective:

- A CBCT scan is often less radiation than a cross-country flight
- It represents a very small fraction of the natural radiation we are exposed to each year

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Is it safe for children?

Yes. When used appropriately, CBCT imaging is considered safe for children. We only recommend this imaging when the diagnostic benefit clearly outweighs the minimal risk, and we carefully tailor each scan to minimize exposure.

How does this information benefit me or my child long-term?

CBCT imaging allows us to:

- Diagnose problems earlier and more accurately
- Guide jaw growth and tooth eruption more predictably
- Reduce the likelihood of complications
- Support airway health and overall facial development
- Create more stable, long-lasting results

In short, it helps us deliver life-changing care with precision and confidence.

If I had x-rays taken elsewhere, can you use them instead of taking a new x-ray?

Please obtain copies of your x-rays and send them to us in advance of your new patient appointment. The doctors will review them and let you know if the information is sufficient for a diagnosis and treatment plan, or if they recommend a new x-ray be taken.

Have more questions?

We believe in transparency and education. If you have any questions about CBCT imaging or your child's treatment plan, our team is always happy to walk you through it.

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