

CHILD SAFETY BLOG

PATRICK MALONE & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
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3-D Imaging for Orthodontics Exposes Teens to High Dose Radiation

A new technology sweeping through dentistry -- especially orthodontics -- is called cone-beam CT scanning. It creates gorgeous 3-D images of the teeth and facial bones, but at a price of potentially high doses of X-rays, that carry a low risk (but still a risk) of cancer.

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The risk accumulates with the more X-ray exposure there is, and sometimes dentists can run a child through the cone-beam CT scanner four times in the course of fitting braces.

The problem is worse because many dentists don't understand the X-ray exposure risk, and therefore minimize it when counseling parents and teens. Also, some dentists who are flacking for the CT scanner manufacturers are spreading mis-information, according to a big investigative report in the New York Times.

One dentist who is a paid spokesman claims in online lectures that the X-ray exposure of a cone-beam CT scan is no more than an airport whole body scanner. In fact, the dose can be more than one hundred times higher with the CT scan.

Sometimes the scans aren't needed at all but are done for convenience. A regular digital camera can produce images of the location of teeth that are adequate to make custom braces, but they take longer than with the CT scan.

Here is a [good list of questions](#) prepared by the Times reporters for parents to ask when the dentist wants to put their child through one of these CT scan machines.

Read the whole [report](#) in the Times here.

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Families interested in learning more about our firm's legal services, including legal representation for children who have suffered serious injuries in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia due to medical malpractice, defective products, birth-related trauma or other injuries, may ask questions or send us information about a particular case by phone or email. There is no charge for contacting us regarding your inquiry. An attorney will respond within 24 hours.

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