

Patient Brochure

OPG and Lateral Cephalometry

What is an Orthopantomogram (OPG)?

An Orthopantomogram, or OPG, is a special type of x-ray that takes images of the lower face, teeth, jaw joints and maxillary sinuses. The teeth are displayed in a long flat line. This x-ray is useful to demonstrate the number of teeth as well as their position and growth, and is particularly useful to assess teeth that have not yet surfaced.

What is Lateral Cephalogram?

A Lateral Cephalogram (or Lat Ceph) is an x-ray taken of the side of the face with very precise positioning, so that various measurements can be made to determine the current and future relationship of the top and bottom jaw (maxilla and mandible) and therefore assess the nature of a patient's bite. This is particularly useful to plan any orthodontic treatment that may be necessary.

As treatment progresses, it is helpful to have any future Lateral Cephalograms taken at the same practice so that the x-rays can be easily compared.

What should patients expect when they arrive at the practice?

During the OPG the arm of the machine will rotate slowly around the head but will not come into contact with the patient. The Radiographer (a technologist trained in medical and dental imaging) will instruct the patient to bite on a small plastic mouthpiece attached to the machine, which keeps the top and bottom teeth separated and helps position the mouth properly in the machine.

For a Lateral Cephalogram you are required to hold still and bite together on the back teeth. Lips should be relaxed. The Radiographer will help ensure that patients are in the correct position before taking the x-ray.

How long does it take?

The procedure is very brief (about 5 minutes or less) and is painless and simple. It is very important that you follow all instructions and hold absolutely still once positioned.

Is there any special preparation required?

There is no special preparation required and there are no after effects following the scan. Once at the practice, patients will be asked to remove any jewellery or metallic items from the head and neck region, including any piercings, hair accessories, dentures and plates, as these often interfere with x-ray image formation and produce unwanted artifacts.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR MEDICARE CARD AND REFERRAL FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

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