

## Digital Radiography Improves The Picture For Root Canal Treatment

(NAPS)—The same digital technology that has transformed the way Americans take and share photos is also revolutionizing dental procedures. The switch from X-ray images to digital radiography for patient diagnosis is making treatment safer, faster and more effective.

This new technology has been embraced most aggressively by endodontists, the dentists who specialize in root canal treatments. Endodontists have long led the dental profession in the adoption of new technologies. According to an October 2004 survey by Dental Products Report, 48 percent of them have already replaced conventional X-rays with digital radiography equipment.

“With digital radiography and other vision-enhancing technologies such as fiberoptic illumination and operating microscopes, endodontists have transformed root canal treatment,” says Marc Balson, D.D.S., president of the American Association of Endodontists (AAE). “These advances, along with endodontists’ specialized training and expertise with anesthesia, have made once-dreaded root canal treatments a quick and virtually pain-free experience.”

Digital radiography offers a number of practical benefits to patients and endodontists alike. For one, it exposes patients to significantly less radiation than conventional X-rays, a fact particularly important for expectant mothers or anyone worried about the potential side effects of prolonged radiation exposure. Because the images don’t need to be developed, digital radiography also eliminates the processing time that X-rays require. This results in quicker procedures, with patients spending less time

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in the dental chair and faster relief of their tooth pain.

Unlike traditional X-ray films, digital images can be enlarged easily to more clearly show decay, fractures or bone loss. They can even be colorized, making them a powerful visual aid to educate patients about the source of their pain and about how root canal treatment can relieve their discomfort.

“Much of the anxiety that patients experience before root canal treatment is caused by fear of the unknown,” says Balson. “Explaining what will be done using digital radiographs can help put their minds at ease about the procedure.”

Digital radiography enhances data storage as well, since bulky X-rays don’t need to be filed away and searched for by hand. Endodontists also can share patient information more efficiently with general practitioners by sending digital images in an e-mail, facilitating communication about treatment before the patient returns to the general dentist for restorative procedures following root canal treatment.

“Digital radiography is almost surely the future of dentistry because of the advantages it offers patients,” says Balson. “But in many endodontists’ offices, its time has already come—and patients undergoing root canal treatment are better off for it.”

For more information, visit [www.rootcanalspecialists.org](http://www.rootcanalspecialists.org).

### Healthy Ideas

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