

STANDARD OF CARE: DIAGNOSTIC RECORDS FOR ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

With the broad array of treatment options available, making orthodontic decisions for you and your family can be difficult. Adding to the confusion is direct advertising by appliance manufacturers as well as provider companies. CAO member orthodontists consider many factors to determine which treatment option(s) will be safe and effective for each patient, but the process begins with gathering basic but critical information about the patient's oral health.



In an effort to assist potential patients in knowing that they are being well assessed before treatment, this document outlines the information that should be obtained before any treatment is undertaken. This recommendation represents the bare minimum of records that are needed to protect the health and safety of patients and to uphold the most basic standard of care.

In many cases additional records are necessary before beginning treatment—such as a 3-D image or x-rays of individual teeth to more fully assess and address a patient's orthodontic needs. Additionally, and especially for adults, a periodontal evaluation by a dentist or periodontist may also be needed.

While these records can be gathered by a licensed technician at the direction of your treating doctor, the California Association of Orthodontists feels that an in-person examination by your treating doctor assures that you have been adequately evaluated before beginning treatment.

This standard of care recommendation for the baseline of records needed prior to beginning orthodontic treatment was developed in consultation with the heads of the University-based orthodontic departments in California and is consistent with the *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Orthodontic and Dental Facial Orthopedics* published by the American Association of Orthodontists and the AAO's position paper: [Legal, Ethical and Clinical Concerns with Common Components of a Direct-To-Consumer Orthodontic Treatment Model](#).

RECORDS NEEDED FOR ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT

The California Association of Orthodontists recommends the following diagnostic records, at a minimum, be obtained before beginning orthodontic treatment:



Phase I Treatment

- Lateral Cephalometric radiograph*, Panorex*, 3 Facial and 5 intraoral photographs* (ABO Standard), Models (either physical or digital)



Single Phase or Phase II Treatment

- Lateral Cephalometric radiograph*, Panorex*, 3 Facial and 5 intraoral photographs* (ABO Standard), Models (either physical or digital)



Adult Treatment

- Lateral Cephalometric radiograph*, Panorex*, 3 Facial and 5 intraoral photographs* (ABO Standard), Models (either physical or digital)



Combined Orthodontic & Surgical Treatment

- Lateral Cephalometric radiograph*, Panorex*, 3 Facial and 5 intraoral photographs* (ABO Standard), Models (either physical or digital)



Limited Tooth Movement for Pre-prosthetic Reasons

(i.e. molar uprighting or single tooth extrusion etc.)

- Panorex*, 3 Facial and 5 intraoral photographs* (ABO Standard), Models (either physical or digital)

*CBCT Scan is acceptable instead of lateral cephalometric radiograph and panorex when the field is sufficient that these radiographs can be generated from it. Intraoral photo can be replaced with a full-color intraoral scan.



EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED RECORDS

To assist you in understanding if the appropriate records have been obtained, the following examples illustrate what each record looks like.

Frontal and Side Photos & Intraoral Photos



Panoramic Radiograph

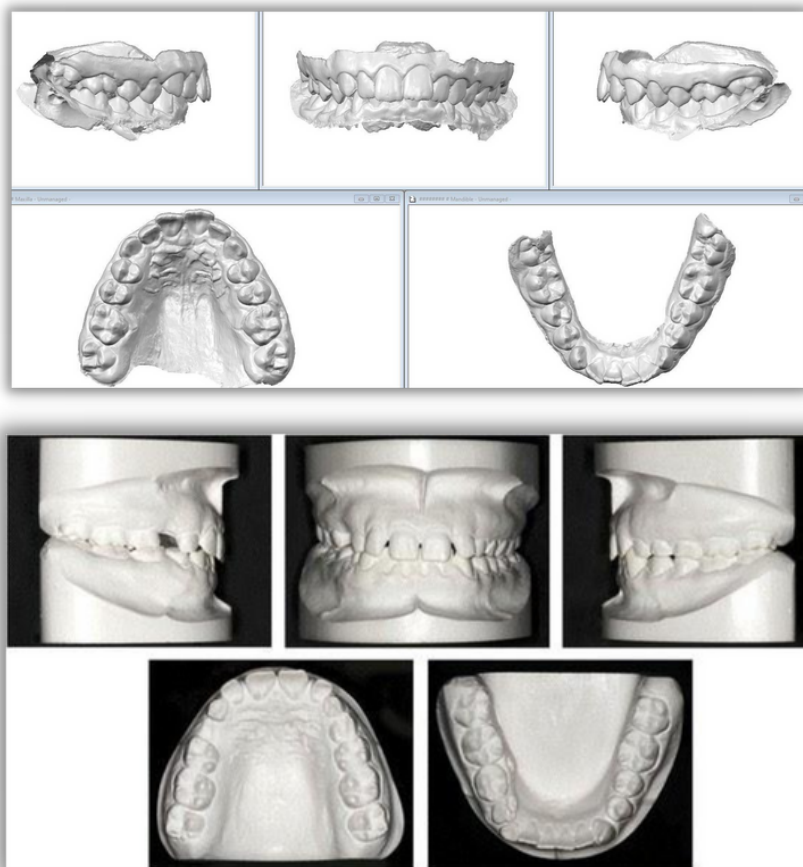


EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED RECORDS

**Lateral Head Film
commonly called a
Cephalometric Radiograph**



Digital or Physical Models of Your Teeth



This document is offered with the goal of providing guidance and facilitating increased access to care while ensuring that the minimum information needed for safe and effective treatment has been gathered prior to beginning orthodontic treatment.