Researchers who have developed this technology have achieved the goal of allowing dentists to achieve the same information gained from a medical CT, without the additional radiation exposure.

Dentists who do not own their own CBCT machines can take advantage of this imaging method by referring patients to imaging centers to acquire this valuable information. The knowledge obtained from capturing 3-D scans has the ability to influence the effectiveness and efficiency of dental treatment.

A dental CBCT scan offers the views and detail needed to perform the latest procedures, while avoiding the unnecessary higher levels of radiation emitted from hospital scans. As the technology continues to evolve, the possibilities for improved dental care can only increase.

Increased software compatibility with surgical guides and orthodontic applications has made CBCT scanners an imperative for some dental offices.

As an oral maxillofacial radiologist and an educator, I firmly believe that with knowledge comes responsibility to provide patients with the best dental care in the safest way possible — a dental CBCT accomplishes this goal without the additional risks involved with hospital scans.

Dr. Bruce Howerton is a board-certified oral and maxillofacial radiologist who practices privately in Raleigh, N.C. He received a DDS degree from the West Virginia University School of Dentistry in 1985. He completed a certificate in endodontics in 1987 from the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry and practiced surgical and non-surgical endodontics in Asheville, N.C. for eight years. In 1999, he entered the UNC Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology graduate program and completed the master of science program. Howerton became a diplomate of the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology in 2003. For more information, see www.carolinaomfimaging.com.