

## FDA Notice on Patient Burns from Electric Handpieces (12/07)

For **UPDATE**, [click here](#).

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently advised health-care professionals about serious patient injuries, including third degree burns, associated with the use of poorly maintained electric dental handpieces during dental procedures. This problem is not limited to dentistry. Rotary surgical handpieces can cause patient burns during orthopedic procedures, as reported in the July 2003 edition of FDA Patient Safety News ([www.fda.gov/cdrh/psn/show17-burns.html](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/psn/show17-burns.html)). DECS has previously reported information about [handpieces overheating and the importance of maintenance procedures](#).

Additional information about the patient injuries caused by electric dental handpieces and recommendations to prevent or minimize the problem can be found by visiting the FDA Web site: [www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety/121207-dental.html](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety/121207-dental.html).

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## **UPDATE** Electric Dental Handpieces and Electric Oral Bone-Cutting Handpieces: FDA Safety Investigation of Patient Burns (9/10)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued additional information about a safety issue with electric dental handpieces. Since 2007, the FDA has received numerous additional reports of patients being burned by electric dental handpieces ranging from first degree burns to third degree burns requiring reconstructive surgery. According to the FDA, the term "handpiece" includes the motor, contrangle, and bur. The FDA is communicating with handpiece manufacturers requesting assistance with correcting problems associated with the overheating hazard of these devices.

As a result of safety investigations, the FDA offers the following recommendations to dental professionals:

- **Be vigilant about maintaining electric dental handpieces and electric oral bone cutting handpieces according to the manufacturer's instructions.**
- **Verify with the manufacturer the appropriate routine service interval for your dental practice, based on the actual use of your electric dental handpiece or electric intraoral bone cutting handpieces.**
- **Train personnel to properly clean and maintain the electric dental handpiece or electric intraoral bone cutting handpiece.**
- **Develop a method for tracking maintenance and routine service for each dental handpiece or electric intraoral bone cutting handpiece.**
- **Examine the electric dental handpiece attachments and electric intraoral bone cutting handpiece attachments prior to use. Do not use worn drills or burs.**
- **Do not use poorly maintained electric dental handpieces or electric intraoral bone cutting handpieces.**
- **Report overheating to the manufacturer.**

Additional information from the FDA on electric handpieces and patient burns can be found by visiting:

- [www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm227208.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm227208.htm).
- [www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/AlertsandNotices/ucm226995.htm](http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/AlertsandNotices/ucm226995.htm).