

Patient Mishap Involving a Metal Three-Way Syringe Tip (11/02)

DECS was recently informed of a patient mishap in which a metal three-way syringe tip was unexpectedly ejected from the syringe during use. The patient inadvertently swallowed the tip and required medical treatment to



Typical Three-Way Syringe with Inserted Tip

retrieve it. Naturally, this type of accident is disturbing for all involved and every attempt should be made to prevent its occurrence. Inquiries by DECS determined that the clinic was using non-original equipment manufacturer (non-OEM) syringe tips for their dental units and had not obtained the requisite adaptor kit to ensure that the tip fit securely into the syringe head. DECS recommends the following to prevent the reoccurrence of this type of incident.



1. When possible, purchase and use tips made by the manufacturer of the dental unit.

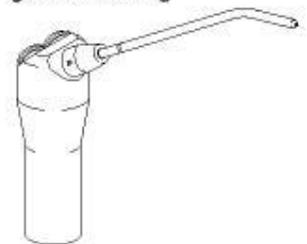
2. If you choose to purchase and use non-OEM syringe tips, be aware that some tips (whether disposable plastic or reusable metal) require adapter kits from their manufacturers. Without these adapters, the tips may not fit securely into the three-way syringe head. Always ensure you have the appropriate adapter kit for the brand of dental unit you have. Before purchasing the tips, contact both the dental unit manufacturer and the tip manufacturer to ask them specifically if the tips will be able to be used on the syringe head. Manufacturers of the tips will assist you in purchasing the appropriate adapter kit, if necessary.

3. Irrespective of the source of the tips, make sure that the dental assistants and providers are trained on how to properly insert and remove them. Several steps have to be performed to securely attach a tip to the syringe head. Some manufacturers provide an illustration to help you determine if the tip has been installed properly.

**Tip properly installed:
no grooves showing**



**Tip not properly installed:
grooves showing**



4. Always maintain the three-way syringe head properly. Some of these heads contain rubber o-rings that help seal the tips and secure them to the syringe head. These rings require lubrication with an approved lubricant. The rings may also be damaged from use and require replacement.

5. If the syringe tip, regardless of its condition, does not fit tightly and securely to the syringe head, do not use it. Determine why it isn't fitting properly. Check the condition of the syringe head's o-rings to see if they need to be lubricated or replaced. If the syringe head is in good condition but the tip still doesn't fit securely, the problem may be with the syringe tip. Try another tip. If it fits securely, discard the poorly-fitting tip.

If you choose to order and use syringe tips from the unit's manufacturer, the table below should help you by providing ordering information. Please note that the manufacturers of only the most common units purchased by the federal services are included in the table. You may have units in your clinic made by other manufacturers. Please contact them when ordering syringe tips.

| Manufacturer | Item Number | Quantity | Retail Cost | Gov't Cost | Govt Cost per Tip |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| A-dec 2601 Crestview Drive Newberg, Oregon 97132 (800) 547-1883 (503) 538-0276 (FAX) www.a-dec.com | 23-0872-01 | 5 | \$26.50 | \$14.25 | \$2.85 |
| | 23-0872-02 | 25 | \$115.00 | \$61.77 | \$2.47 |
| DentalEZ Highway 31 South Bay Minette, AL 36507 (866) 383-4636 (334) 937-0461 (FAX) www.dentalez.com | 3801-656 | 5 | \$43.50 | \$26.10 | \$5.22 |
| Pelton & Crane 11727 Fruehauf Drive P. O. Box 7800 Charlotte, NC 28241-7800 (800) 659-6560 (704) 588-2126 (704) 588-6543 (FAX) | 3060 | 1 | \$4.90 | \$2.45 | \$2.45 |
| | 3061 | 5 | \$22.50 | \$11.50 | \$2.30 |
| | 3059 | 50 | \$160.00 | \$80.00 | \$1.60 |