

Safe-Mate Safety Needle (5/06) For UPDATE, [click here](#).

Question: Has DECS evaluated the Safe-Mate Safety Needle? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this safety device?

Answer: DECS recently completed a clinical-user evaluation of the Safe-Mate Safety Needle manufactured by MedPro Safety Products. Each Safe-Mate safety needle is individually wrapped in sterile packaging. The safety needle attaches on most standard metal aspirating syringes just like an ordinary dental needle. To use a Safe-Mate safety needle, the user simply presses the safety release and slides down the protective sleeve and proceeds with the injection.



After each injection, or to change anesthetic cartridges simply slide the sleeve back over the needle into the locked position. According to MedPro Safety this procedure can be accomplished with one hand. The instructions include an illustrated step-by-step instruction sheet and an instructional CD. The Safe-Mate Safety Needle offers protection from the needle because the needle is covered before the injection and can be easily covered after the injection. Evaluators found the Safe-Mate Safety Needle easy to assemble and reported that the safety feature was easy to recognize and use. Most evaluators reported that the device functioned as intended and was reliable during the evaluation period. There was



one reported percutaneous injury during the evaluation period. This involved a dental assistant who had not received appropriate training on the product and when the needle was being removed from the syringe the protective sleeve was inadvertently activated and the assistant was stuck with the needle. Thirty-eight percent (6/16) of the evaluators experienced difficulty visualizing aspiration of blood into the anesthetic cartridge. When asked to comment on the overall

safety of the device, 10 of 16 dentists agreed that the device was safe, two disagreed, and four were undecided. When asked if the device was safer than using a conventional needle recapped using one hand, eight dentists (50%) agreed with the statement, four (25%) disagreed, four (25%) were undecided. When asked the same question, 39% (4/13) of the dental assistants felt the product was safer than using a conventional needle recapped using one hand and 52% (8/13) did not feel the product was safer. Evaluating safety devices is challenging and several factors can impact the outcome of the product evaluation. With the introduction of any new device or technique, a period of adjustment and relearning of technique is necessary. The short duration of this clinical evaluation; staff experience and preference for conventional devices; and perceived needs for devices with safety features are factors that can affect safety device evaluation. It is also important to consider that when presented with a device that has a significantly different design than a traditional device, decisions regarding preference and future use can be dependent upon the individual practitioners' style and technique. All of these factors can affect the evaluation of safety devices and could account for the variety of opinions obtained during this evaluation. This illustrates the importance of having staff members responsible for patient care involved in the identification and selection process when considering and evaluating new safety devices.

Manufacturer	MedPro Safety Products, Inc. 817 Winchester Road, Suite 200 Lexington, KY 40505 (800) 511-1669 (859) 225-5375 (859) 225-5347 FAX www.safe-mate.com	
Suggested Retail Price	\$32.00	100 individually packaged, sterile Safe-Mate Safety Needles
Government Price	\$32.00	100 individually packaged, sterile Safe-Mate Safety Needles
Available Sizes/Product Numbers	Size (color coding)	Product Number
	25 gauge long (red)	N5252
	27 gauge short (orange)	N5271
	27 gauge long (yellow)	N5272
	30 gauge short (blue)	N5301
	30 gauge extra short (purple)	N5300
Advantages¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Potential to decrease percutaneous injuries compared to conventional dental needle + Provides an engineering control making incorrect needle recapping less likely + Can be attached to a conventional metal dental anesthetic syringe + Safety feature can be activated using one hand + Individually wrapped in sterile packaging material 	
Disadvantages¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bulkiness of plastic protective sleeve may reduce visibility in the oral cavity - Plastic protective sleeve may fog and reduce visibility in the oral cavity - May be difficult to see aspirated blood through the protective sleeve - May not fit all conventional metal dental anesthetic syringes - More flexible than other dental needles - Produces an increased volume of sharps waste - Requires a certain period of accommodation by the user 	

¹Information compiled from limited DECS clinical evaluations.

UPDATE In October 2008, DECS learned that MedPro Safety Products, Inc. is no longer selling the Safe-Mate® Safety Needle.