

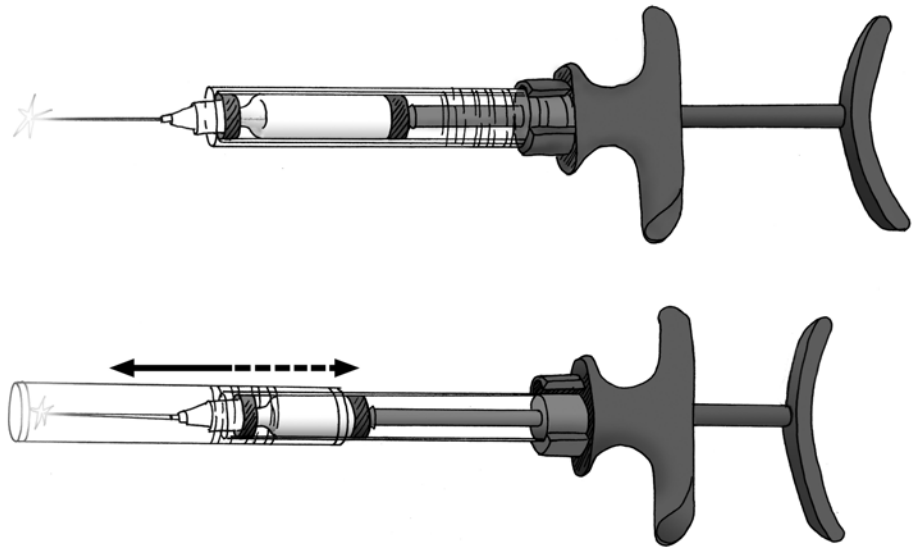


## Worker stuck by contaminated needle

In the instrument processing area of a dentist's office, a dental assistant was trying to remove the needle from a re-capped syringe. The syringe had been used to administer anaesthetic to a patient. When the assistant tried to remove the needle, the cap fell off. While trying to put the cap back on the needle, she pricked her finger. Safety-engineered hollow-bore needles were not being used as required. Safe work procedures for handling contaminated sharps were also not in place. The dental chart listed the patient's positive hepatitis C status.

### Safe work practices:

- Use a needleless device or a safety-engineered needle for any dental or medical procedure that poses a risk of an accidental needle-stick injury, including – but not limited to – the following:
  - administering medications or fluids (including anaesthetic)
  - withdrawing body fluids
  - accessing a vein or artery
- Establish safe work procedures – along with appropriate training and supervision – to minimize exposure to blood and body fluids, including the following:
  - prohibiting re-capping and manual removal of contaminated needles
  - activating safety features on needles after use
  - properly disposing of needles after use
  - ensuring workers' vaccinations are current
  - wearing gloves, face protection, and gowns as required
- Advise workers who have been stuck by a contaminated sharp to seek immediate medical attention – preferably within 2 hours of being injured.



*A safety-engineered needle with the guard retracted (above) and the guard extended (below).*