FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is backflow?
A: Backflow is the movement of fluid in the opposite direction from which it was originally moving. In the case of the dental unit evacuation system, backflow is the flow of fluids from the dental unit evacuation system back into a patient's mouth.

Q: Are SAFE-FLO® Products a single use disposable?
A: Yes, the SAFE-FLO® Products are a single use product and must be disposed of after each patient.

Q: When does backflow occur?
A: Backflow can occur under many situations. Research studies indicate that backflow occurs when there is a fluctuation in the vacuum pressure. Fluctuations typically occur when the end of the saliva ejector is blocked by the cheek, tongue or other parts of the mouth, in addition to when a patient seals their lips around the saliva ejector like a straw. The SAFE-FLO® Saliva Ejectors and valves were developed to prevent backflow during these conditions.

Q: How do I use the SAFE-FLO® Saliva Ejector?
A: The SAFE-FLO® Saliva Ejector is designed to be used like a standard saliva ejector on the low volume evacuation line. Simply insert the SAFE-FLO® Saliva ejector onto the open valve of the tubing and bend the saliva ejector as preferred/needed.

Q: Why would I use the SAFE-FLO® HV Valve?
A: The same conditions that cause backflow when using a saliva ejector also occur when using an HVE Tip. The HV Valve is used with a HVE tip. The SAFE-FLO® HV Valve easily connects into standard HVE tips and then is inserted into the HV line.

Q: What is the difference between the SAFE-FLO® HV Valve and the Adapter?
A: The SAFE-FLO® HV Valve and Adapter are both used on the HV tubing/line. The SAFE-FLO® HV Valve is used on an HVE tip while the SAFE-FLO® Adapter allows use of the HV evacuation line with a standard saliva ejector.
Q: What does the CDC say about the use of saliva ejectors and backflow?
A: Backflow from low-volume saliva ejectors occurs when the pressure in the patient’s mouth is less than that in the evacuator. Studies have reported that backflow in low-volume suction lines can occur and microorganisms be present in the lines retracted into the patient’s mouth when a seal around the saliva ejector is created (e.g., by a patient closing lips around the tip of the ejector, creating a partial vacuum) (1-3). This backflow can be a potential source of cross-contamination; occurrence is variable because the quality of the seal formed varies between patients. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that gravity pulls fluid back toward the patient’s mouth whenever a length of the suction tubing holding the tip is positioned above the patient’s mouth, or during simultaneous use of other evacuation (high-volume) equipment (1-3). Although no adverse health effects associated with the saliva ejector have been reported, practitioners should be aware that in certain situations, backflow could occur when using a saliva ejector.4

Q: What is the difference between the SAFE-FLO® Saliva Ejector and the SAFE-FLO® SE Valve?
A: The SAFE-FLO® Saliva ejector is an all-in-one saliva ejector with the valve. This all in one “system” is issued in place of the current saliva ejector. The SAFE-FLO® SE Valve allows the addition of the SAFE-FLO® Valve to a standard saliva ejector. The combination of the SAFE-FLO® SE Valve and a saliva ejector provides patients with the added benefit of backflow prevention.

Q: How do the SAFE-FLO® Valves work?
A: All of the the SAFE-FLO® Products contain an internal one-way seated valve. When used on both the high and low evacuation lines, the one-way valve opens and allows the evacuation of fluids from the patient’s mouth. When the vacuum pressure changes, such as when the patient closes their mouth around the tip, the end of the tip is blocked or when another instrument is used, the valve snaps into a closed position creating a barrier to prevent back flow of saliva and other potentially infectious materials into the patient’s mouth.