Sharps Safety

Why is recapping needles dangerous?
It is extremely dangerous to hold a needle in one hand and attempt to cover it with a small cap held in the other hand because the following might happen:
• The needle could miss the cap and stab the hand holding it.
• The needle could pierce the cap and stab the hand holding it.
• The poorly fitting cap could slip off a recapped needle and stab the hand holding it.

How to protect yourself from needle-stick injuries:
• Avoid the use of needles if safe and effective alternatives are available.
• Select, evaluate and use devices with safety features that reduce the risk of needlestick injury.
• Avoid recapping needles.
• Plan for safe handling and disposal of needles before using them.
• Put uncapped needles in a rigid tray during procedures.
• Promptly dispose of used needles in appropriate sharps-disposal containers.
• Report all needle-stick and sharps-related injuries promptly to ensure that you receive appropriate follow-up care.
• Substitute plasticware for glass when possible.
• Follow safety guidelines for all sharps hazards (razor blades, scalpels, slides).
• Participate in training.

Needle Disposal
Always dispose of needles and other sharps in a rigid, puncture-resistant container immediately after use.

Avoid Recapping
Do not recap needles for disposal whenever possible. If recapping is required for the procedure being done, you must use tongs, a recapping device or one-hand scoop method to recap the needle. Never recap needles using one hand to hold the cap and the other to hold the needle!