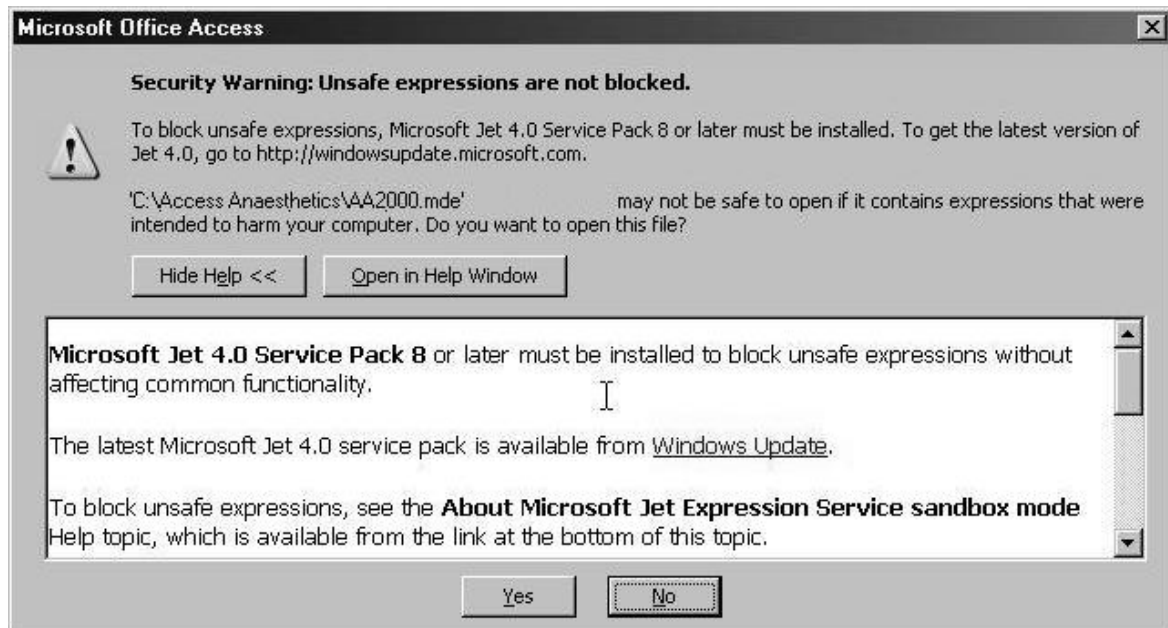


Access Anaesthetics - Security issues when using Microsoft Office & Access 2003

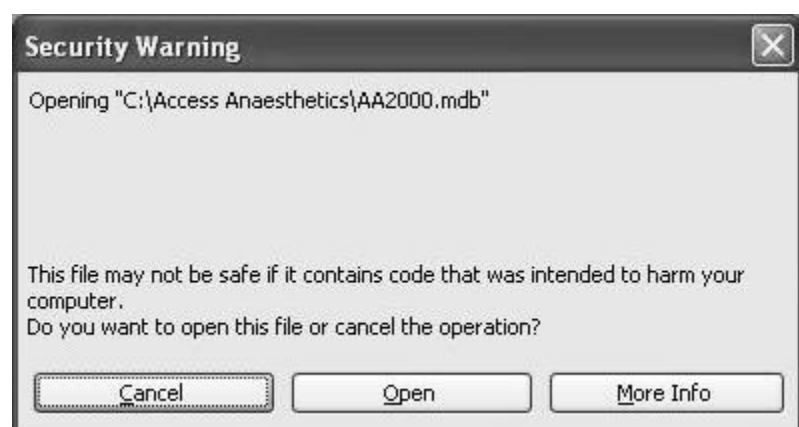
If you have Access 2003 (or Office 2003) you may encounter the following message when opening Access Anaesthetics...



Scary isn't it! If you click No, the database will close. Obviously you must click Yes, and the database will open.

You will probably then get an additional message as shown at right ...

These messages relate to a security feature of Access 2003 called the 'Sandbox'. Microsoft were a little premature in implementing this feature for Access 2003 and a patch is required to avoid seeing this message.



You need to install a Microsoft patch called Jet 4.0 Service Pack 8. If you don't install this, you will continue to see these messages whenever you open Access Anaesthetics, or any other Access database.

To install Service Pack 8, go to the following link on the Microsoft website. Download and install the version which is appropriate for your operating system.

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;239114>

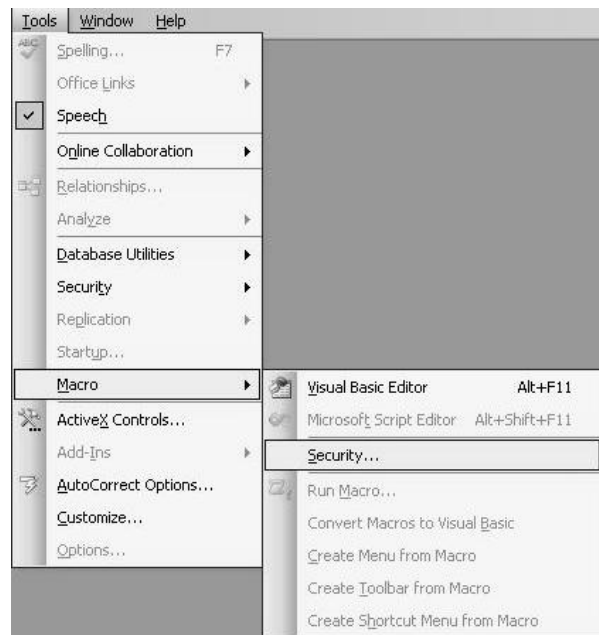
- Alternatively
1. Point your browser to www.windowsupdate.com
 2. Click on the *Scan for Updates* link
 3. Pick Jet 4, Service Pack 8 from the Windows list
 4. Find Update for Jet 4.0 Service Pack 8 (KB829558) and click Add
 5. Click the Review and Install updates link
 6. Click Install Now.

After installing Service Pack 8, you will no longer see the first message but you will still get the second message. This is a warning about the potential for macro viruses to run from the application. You probably see similar messages if you open an Excel spreadsheet containing macros. Obviously, a complex application like Access Anaesthetics requires this ability.

To avoid seeing this second message, you need to switch the macro virus protection to a lower level. This will enable you to open the database without any messages.

The only other way to avoid this message appearing is for us to jump through significant hoops to 'digitally sign' the application. This isn't an option for us at present.

To modify your macro settings, open Microsoft Access without opening any database. On the Tools menu, select Macro, then Security.



The following window will open ...

Change the security level to Low.

This means that Access Anaesthetics (and other databases) will be allowed to open without a security warning. Sure, they could contain viruses, but Access Anaesthetics itself is safe, and you probably have another virus protection mechanism on your computer anyway to check other files.

The Medium setting gives you a warning message before allowing you to open any databases.

The High setting will not allow you to open any databases unless they are 'digitally signed'.



You will then get the following message. This is asking whether you want to disable the 'Sandbox' security feature mentioned above. You should click No so that any unsafe code in any Access application is prevented from running. This will not affect any functions of Access Anaesthetics (provided you have upgraded to AA version 3.4 or later).



You should now be able to open Access Anaesthetics without getting any security warnings while still adopting the more significant security features of Access 2003.

Is this process safe?

By default, Access 2003 uses a feature called the 'Sandbox' to prevent unsafe expressions from being executed. For example, a query could contain code that might delete files from your computer. This feature is disabled in Access 2002 and earlier versions, making earlier versions less safe. Although you can turn the Sandbox mode off, we recommend you do not do this, so as to utilize the enhanced security. Because of a Microsoft issue, you need to upgrade to Jet 4.0 Service Pack 8 to enable this security feature. If you don't you will continue to get the first warning shown above, and your computer will not be protected from unsafe expressions.

But what does this mean? If we wanted to, we could quite easily build malicious code into Access Anaesthetics to damage your computer. The Sandbox protection would not stop this. So you have to trust us to not do this (or stop using Access Anaesthetics!). Similarly with macro virus protection. By setting this to Low, you are making it slightly more likely that a virus in an Access database may infect your computer. But every Access database has the potential to do this. The only real protection is to not open the database or to scan all files with an up-to-date virus scanner before opening it. Again, you have to trust us not to insert malicious code, and not to send you files that contain viruses.

If you don't trust a database, don't open it. If you set the macro security setting to Low, you will simply avoid being asked again whether you want to open the database.

Summary of the above steps

If you are using Access 2003 and receive security warnings when opening Access Anaesthetics:

1. Download and install the Jet 4.0 Service Pack 8 patch from the Microsoft website.
2. Open Access 2003 without opening any databases and change the Macro security setting to 'Low'.
3. When asked if you want to allow evaluation of unsafe expressions, click No.

Step 1 is essential. Step 2 is optional, but leaving the macro security setting at Medium will cause you to see the macro security warning each time you open Access Anaesthetics.

For further information, contact us, or read about security in the Access 2003 help file, or on the Microsoft website.