Infection Control Micro-Learns
User Guide

About the Micro-Learns:

The Project Firstline *Infection Control Micro-Learns* are a series of **guided infection control discussions that provide brief, on-the-job educational opportunities**. Each micro-learn focuses on a single infection control topic and connects infection control concepts to immediate, practical value. Healthcare workers can easily apply the key points to their daily work and perform the recommended actions to keep germs from spreading.

Using the Micro-Learns:

The micro-learns can be **incorporated into existing opportunities where groups of healthcare workers gather**, such as pre-shift "huddles" or team meetings. The sessions should be led or facilitated by an experienced team member with infection control expertise.

Each micro-learn package includes an adaptable discussion guide for the facilitator and one job aid.

Discussion Guide: The discussion guide is not a script. Facilitators are encouraged to **adapt the guide for the audience** by incorporating relevant and practical questions and ideas. For instance, facilitators can connect the content to the audience's job duties, facility-specific cases or issues, resources and points of contact, or other information.

Job Aid: The one-page, visual job aid helps to **reinforce the key messages of the micro-learn**. Facilitators are encouraged to make the job aid available after the micro learn session, such as in digital or hard copy form.

Notes for Facilitators:

- Before presenting a micro-learn, **check the policies and protocols at your facility** and adapt the content accordingly.
- Build on your knowledge, experience, and awareness to **connect the content to local context or relevant recent events** so that your audience can apply the concepts confidently.
- The micro-learns **reinforce infection control concepts** when risks are observed **in patients or in the patient environment**, not necessarily in visitors or other staff members.
- Remind your audience that if they see a patient in distress—e.g., with shortness of breath, bleeding, or otherwise at risk of immediate harm—they should **respond to the emergency according to facility protocols**.

www.cdc.gov/ProjectFirstline

Water Micro-Learn Discussion Guide:
A Sneak Stream:
Water in Health Care

Use the talking points below and accompanying job aid to engage your team in short, focused discussion. Adapt to meet your needs.

1. Introduce the Topic

Share key information about the topic that your audience should **know and connect to your local context:**

- Germs can live and grow in water, including tap water, and these germs can spread and cause infections in patients.
  - These germs include drug-resistant germs - Pseudomonas, Acinetobacter, and Burkholderia cepacia
  - This is why all of us need to know about germs in water and what actions to take to prevent infections.
    - Facilitator Note: Discuss an example of water-associated germs in your facility and how they were handled.
- Tap water can be used safely for activities like brushing teeth and bathing, but should not be used with sterile equipment or when caring for patients at higher risk for infection (those with weakened immune systems)

2. Expand on the Topic

Share information about what your audience should **do**:

- Tiny droplets that you can't even see can splash onto wound dressing supplies, sterile equipment and other care items nearby.
  - This can be from splashes from a sink or from tasks like handling ventilator circuits.
- Germs can be found in non-sterile water (i.e. tap water), opened bottles of sterile water, and wet areas like ventilator tubing and sink surfaces.
- Using tap water with sterile equipment or during certain procedures can spread germs to patients and cause deadly infections. This is why we never use tap water for surgical procedures.
  - Facilitator Note: Give some examples that are relevant to your staff when tap water is not okay to use (i.e. during surgery or performing trach or ventilator care)

3. Discuss with Your Team

Find out how your audience feels about the topic. Sample questions include:

- What actions can we take to keep germs from spreading through water?
  - Be aware of splashes and sprays and wipe them up promptly.
  - Keep patient care items away from sinks and splashes.
    - If you find an area that needs a shelf or other storage to keep these items away form the sink and splashes, tell your leadership.
  - Clean and disinfect surfaces and medical equipment near sinks.
  - Never use tap water with sterile equipment or during procedures requiring sterile water.

4. Wrap Up and Reinforce

Share related facility-specific information and cue to follow-up opportunities:

- Water can spread harmful germs in healthcare settings, but it doesn't have to. You can stop the spread by being aware of the risks of water in healthcare settings and taking action to prevent infections.
  - Facilitator Note: Share facility protocols that may be useful for your team and other opportunities for education. Share contact information for people or groups your team can contact to report issues.
- Share reminders, prompts, and opportunities for further learning as appropriate, including the Project Firstline website at cdc.gov/projectfirstline.

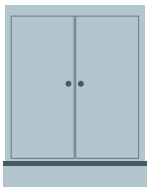
A Sneaky Stream: Water in Healthcare

Germs, including harmful germs, can live and grow in water. These germs can spread and cause infections in patients.

Be Water Aware
Recognize when healthcare tasks may involved exposure to water or wet surfaces.

Never Use Tap Water with Sterile Equipment
This spreads dangerous germs to patients and equipment.

Be Aware of Splashes
Every time you turn the water on, there is a risk for germs to splash and spread to nearby equipment and surfaces.



Keep Care Items Protected
Store patient care items, such as wound dressings and medications away from sinks and splashes.

Learn More

Reduce Risk from Water: https://bit.ly/3R7nmEi Germs Live in Water

Infographic: https://bit.ly/3UYQte6

Environmental Guidelines - Water: https://bit.ly/3V4XZEr