

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 their 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.

Diarrhea Micro-Learn Discussion Guide:

What to do when you see diarrhea

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**:

- Diarrhea is liquid stool. All stool is full of germs. Diarrhea can be caused by a lot of things, but it is sometimes a sign of a pathogen that can cause illness, even in healthy people.
- Infections that cause diarrhea spread because germs move easily between hands, equipment, and surfaces in health care. Some of these germs can be difficult to kill.
- Common examples of infections that cause diarrhea include *C. difficile*, norovirus, and rotavirus (especially in children).

2. Expand on the topic

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

- Assume that diarrhea is infectious.
- Use gloves when you're working with a patient who has diarrhea or in their environment. You might also need a gown if there's a risk you could get stool on your clothes, like if you're helping the patient with personal care or leaning over their bed.
- Clean your hands immediately after interacting with the patient or their environment, and immediately after taking off your gloves. You can use either hand sanitizer or soap and water, but if your hands are visibly dirty, then soap and water is preferred.

3. Discuss with your team

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

- What do you usually do when you see diarrhea? Do you worry you might catch something? How do you protect yourself and your patients? When might you call for help or assistance?
- Do you have all the tools and information you need to do your job safely?
- As a team, how can we help each other take the right infection control actions when we see diarrhea to keep germs from spreading?

4. Wrap up and reinforce

Reinforce key takeaways:

- Diarrhea can be caused by an infection, but it is always full of germs.
- Use gloves when you're working with the patient and in their environment, and clean your hands immediately afterwards.

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

- Connect content with information, such as additional infection control actions to take if the cause of the diarrhea is known; where to find cleaning supplies and PPE; facility protocols for caring for patients with diarrhea; recent cases or examples of patients with diarrhea; or other relevant information.
- Share reminders, prompts, and opportunities for further learning as appropriate, including the Project Firstline website at www.cdc.gov/projectfirstline.

When you see diarrhea, there's often more than meets the eye.



**Germ from diarrhea are everywhere and can be infectious.
Protect yourself and others:**



Use gloves when you're working with a patient or resident or in their environment. Clean your hands immediately afterwards.



Use a gown if there is risk you might get stool on your clothes, like if you're performing personal care tasks or leaning over the bed.



Clean and disinfect the patient's or resident's environment frequently with the correct products.

Learn More

Diarrhea Dilemma Interactive Scenario: <https://bit.ly/48SdFRz>

Germ Live in the Gut Infographic: <https://bit.ly/3s1cleg>

Hand Hygiene Training Module: <https://bit.ly/49B21KW>