

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, which facilitators are encouraged to review prior to presenting.



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.

Micro-Learn Discussion Guide:

Use Your Brain With Drains

Prepare

Take a moment to think about sink drains. Has your facility had any recent problems such as slow-moving drains or clogs? What does your facility ask healthcare workers to do if they notice problems with drains? How might germs move from the drain to patients, and what actions can we take to prevent this?

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

1. Introduce the topic

- A drain is a connection between the sewer system and patient care areas. This means that germs in the sewer can be found in plumbing all the way up to the drain.
- These germs can build up in the plumbing to form slimy layers called biofilms.
 - Germs in biofilms can spread to patients and cause infections that are difficult and sometimes impossible to treat.

2. Expand on the topic

- When water splashes out of a drain, it can spread germs from the biofilm to your skin and nearby surfaces and equipment.
 - You should turn the faucet away from the drain when possible so running water doesn't hit the drain directly and splash out.
- Don't dump liquids like juice or IV fluid down the drain because this can feed the biofilm and help it grow.
 - This is why we dispose of liquids in designated sinks and not handwashing sinks.
 - **Facilitator Note:** *Discuss how and where to safely dispose of liquids other than water.*

3. Discuss with your team

- What actions can we take to keep germs in drains from spreading?
 - Aim faucets and running water away from drains when possible.
 - Keep care supplies like wound dressings, injectable medications, and IV bags several feet away from the sink to avoid being splashed.
 - Report problems with drains, like leaks or slow drainage.
 - Keep counters clean and dry and wipe up splashes and sprays immediately.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces around sinks regularly.

4. Wrap up and reinforce

- Germs can live and grow in drain biofilms and can spread to patients and cause infections, but they don'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.*

Drains and Biofilms: Hiding Places for Germs

Germs in the sewer, including drug-resistant germs, can be found in the plumbing all the way up to the drain.



Drain biofilms are slimy layers of germs that can splash out of the sink.

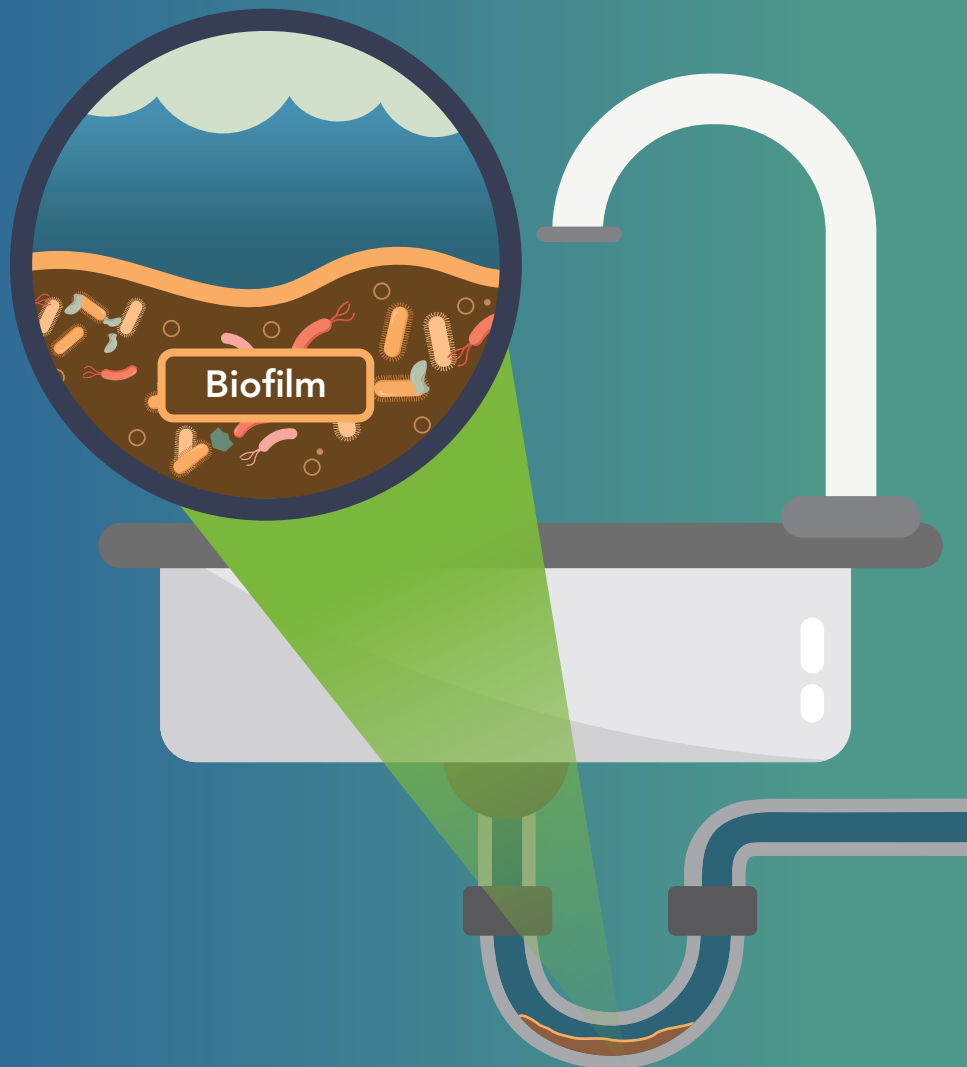


Don't feed the biofilm!

Never dispose of liquid waste (e.g., beverages, tube feeds, IV fluids) in a handwashing sink.



Reduce germ spread by keeping supplies away from the sink, minimizing splashes, and cleaning and disinfecting sinks and countertops regularly.



Learn More

Reduce Risk from Water: <https://bit.ly/3R7nmEi>
Germs Live in Water Infographic: <https://bit.ly/3UYQte6>