

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: Don't Sink Your Patient's Care

Prepare

Take a moment to think about the sinks in patients' or residents' rooms in your facility. How are sinks used and how often? Are they located near clean supplies? What liquids have you seen workers and visitors pour into the sinks? How can you reduce the risk of splashes and sprays from the sinks in your facility?

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

1. Introduce the topic

- A variety of germs can live and grow in water, including tap water. These germs can survive and continue growing in sinks and spread to patients.
- Sinks are an ideal environment for biofilms, which are slimy layers of germs that grow on wet surfaces and can be difficult to remove.
 - Biofilms can grow back quickly, so it is important that sink areas are regularly cleaned and disinfected, and free of standing water.

2. Expand on the topic

- Never dump liquids like IV fluids or drinks down the sink because they provide food for biofilms.
 - **Facilitator Note:** Discuss with your team where liquid waste should be discarded and how it should be transported.
- When water is turned on, germs can splash several feet from the sink, even if you can't see the water droplets.
 - These splashes can spread germs to countertops and nearby surfaces and equipment.
 - This is why patient care items should not be kept near the sink and all splashes should be cleaned up as soon as possible.
- Store patient care items far enough away from the sink that they won't get splashed when the sink is used.
 - **Facilitator Note:** Discuss who to contact if you find an area that needs a shelf or other storage to keep patient care items away from the sink and splashes.

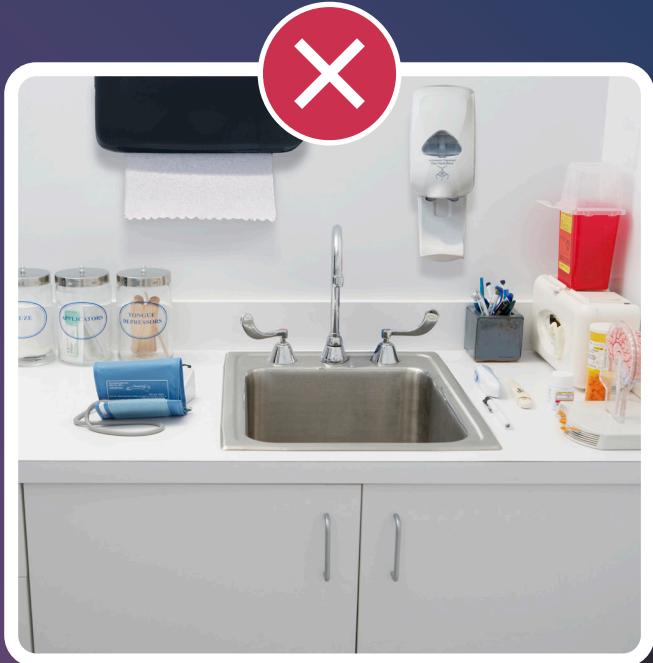
3. Discuss with your team

- How can we keep germs from growing in and spreading from sinks?
 - Never dump liquids other than water in the patient care sink.
 - Be aware of splashes and sprays and wipe them up promptly.
 - Keep the sink area free of patient care supplies.
 - Faucets, sinks, and nearby countertops should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
 - If you find an area that needs a shelf or other storage to keep patient care items away from the sink and splashes, tell your leadership.

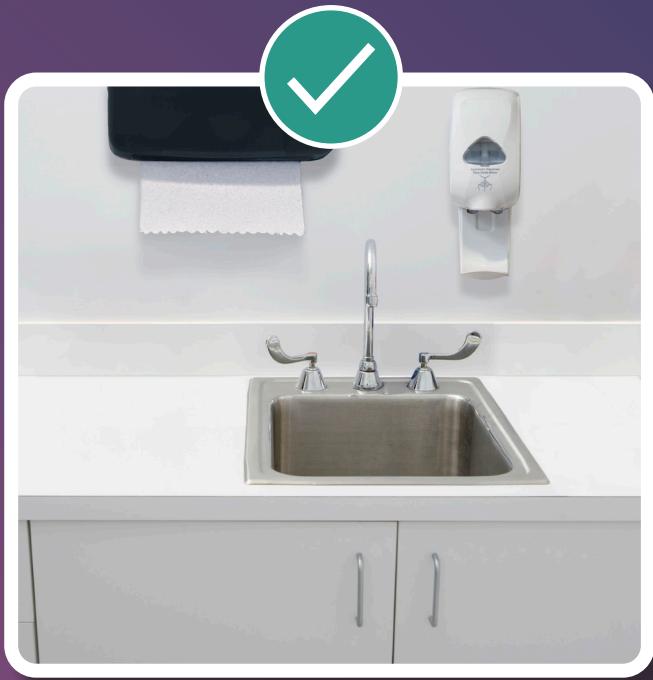
4. Wrap up and reinforce

- Germs that grow in sinks 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.

Don't Sink Your Patient's Care



Keep sink areas free of patient care items.



Never pour liquids other than water (e.g., IV fluid, drinks) in the patient care sink.



Be aware of splashes from sinks to nearby surfaces, equipment, and care items.

Clean and disinfect faucets, sinks, and nearby countertops regularly.

Learn More

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