

# 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. Health care 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 health care 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:** The discussion guide is not a script. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the guide for their audience by including relevant and practical questions and ideas.
- **A job aid for the facilitator:** The 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 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.

# "What is a Virus?" Micro-Learn Discussion Guide

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



## INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

Share information about the topic that your audience should know:

- The health care environment contains many types of viruses, which are very tiny germs.
- Viruses invade living, normal cells and use those cells to multiply and produce other viruses like themselves. This can kill, damage, or change the cells and make you sick.
- Reservoir: a place where pathogens live and thrive.
- Pathway: a way for pathogens to be spread from their reservoir to another reservoir or to a person to infect.



## EXPAND THE TOPIC

Share additional information about what your audience should know on the job:

- Different viruses attack certain cells in your body, such as in your liver, respiratory system, or blood.
- Once a person is infected with a virus, their body becomes a reservoir of virus particles.
- Those virus particles can be released in bodily fluids, such as by coughing and sneezing, by shedding skin, or in some cases even touching surfaces. This is the beginning of how germs are spread.
- Common respiratory infections are RSV, COVID-19, and flu.
  - RSV (**R**espiratory **S**yncytial **V**irus) - adults have mild, cold-like symptoms, but may develop a lung infection or pneumonia.
    - 60,000 - 120,000 RSV hospitalizations among adults 65 years and older.

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## DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM

Find out how your audience feels about the topic:

- Are you familiar with how germs are spread in health care?
- Do you know the most common viral infections in health care?
- Has your facility had any recent viral infection outbreaks?
  - Do you know how it started or how long it lasted?
  - Was there anything you did to help slow the spread?
- What are some ways to reduce the spread of infections in health care?

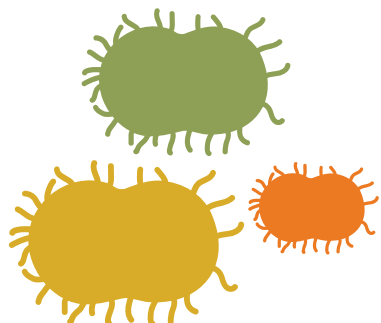


## WRAP UP AND REINFORCE

Reinforce key takeaways:

- Risk recognition is seeing the potential for a problem to happen. You see risks every day at home and at work, and you take steps to minimize them. You can help control infections in health care by learning to recognize the risks for germs to spread and cause infection and taking the necessary steps to prevent those risks from happening.
- To prevent the spread of germs, you can:
  - Wash your hands often.
  - Keep your hands off your face.
  - Avoid close contact with sick people.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes.
  - Clean and disinfect surfaces.
  - Stay home when you are sick.
  - Stay up to date with vaccinations.

# How Do Viruses Spread?



Viruses are very tiny germs that can cause infections like the common cold and flu.

## Risk Recognition

**Seeing Potential Problems**

**Taking action to keep something bad from happening**

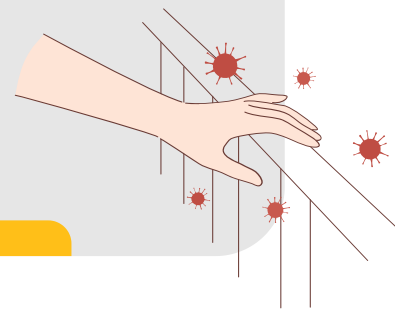


## Reservoirs

- Skin
- Blood
- Respiratory system
- GI System (Gut)
- Water and wet surfaces
- Devices
- Dirt and dust
- Dry surfaces

## Pathways

- Touch
- Breathing in
- Splashes and sprays
- Breaking down the body's natural defenses



# Infection Control Practices for Reducing Viral Infections



**Practicing  
proper hand  
hygiene**



**Practicing  
respiratory  
and cough  
etiquette**



**Using  
transmission-  
based  
precautions**



**Staying home  
when sick**



**Cleaning and  
disinfecting  
properly**



**Staying up to  
date with  
vaccinations**



**Avoiding close  
contact with  
sick people**



**Keeping hands  
off face**

