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.

Cough and Congestion Micro-Learn Discussion Guide:

What to do when you see a patient with cough and congestion

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:***

- Coughing by itself can be caused by a lot of things, but a cough in combination with congestion—a stuffy, runny nose, runny eyes, and a nasally voice—is commonly caused by a virus.
- These viruses spread easily when an infected person talks, breathes, coughs, or otherwise blows air out of their nose or mouth. One person releasing these germs into the air can infect multiple people quickly.
- Some of these viruses, like cytomegalovirus (CMV), don't cause major problems for healthy people, but they can cause harm to vulnerable patients.

2. Expand on the topic

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

- If you're near a patient with cough and congestion and don't know what's causing their symptoms, you can protect yourself from breathing in infectious particles by using a facemask and considering use of a NIOSH-approved respirator according to facility policies.
- As soon as possible, the patient should be placed in a separate room, away from others.
- The patient should wear a mask to keep their germs from reaching you and others, if it's safe for them to do so, i.e., if they're over the age of 2 and are able to remove the mask on their own if they need to.
- Check that air vents in the room are not blocked, as this could prevent the ventilation system from working properly.

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 a patient who is coughing and has congestion? Do you worry that you might catch something? 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 a patient who is coughing and has congestion to keep germs from spreading?

4. Wrap up and reinforce

Reinforce key takeaways:

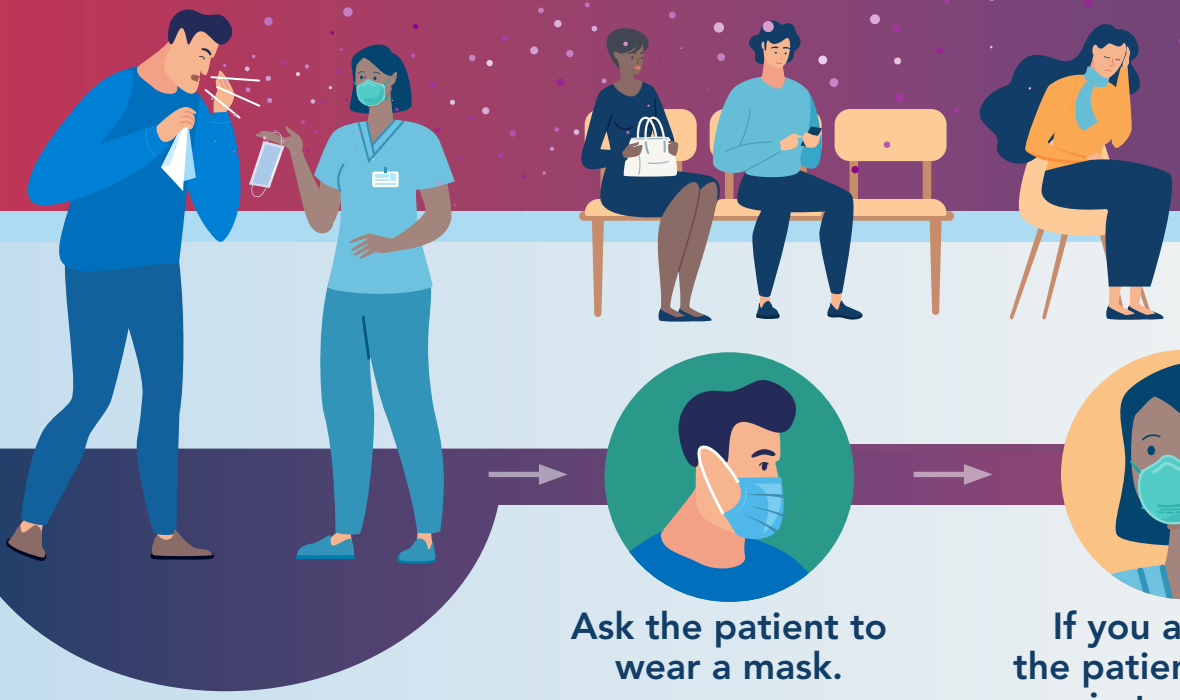
- If you're near a patient with cough and congestion and you don't know what's causing it, use a facemask or respirator to keep from breathing in infectious particles.

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

- Connect content with information such as facility protocols for patients with respiratory virus symptoms, facility triage and screening procedures, where to find respirators and whom to call if there are none left, recent cases or examples of patients with cough and congestion, or other relevant information.
- Share reminders, prompts, and opportunities for further learning as appropriate, including the Project Firstline website at www.cdc.gov/projectfirstline.

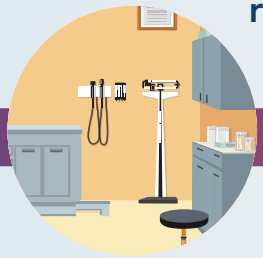
One patient with cough and congestion can release germs into the air and infect multiple people quickly.

You can help stop the spread of germs.

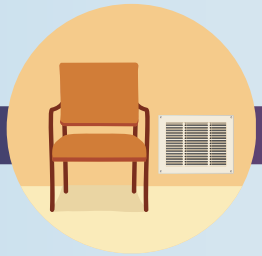


Ask the patient to wear a mask.

If you are near the patient, wear a respirator or mask.



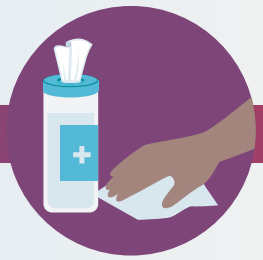
Place the patient in a separate room.



Check to make sure air vents are not blocked.

If the patient also has a rash, check with clinical and infection prevention teams for additional infection control steps.

Clean your hands.



Clean and disinfect surfaces and shared devices.

Learn More

Germs Can Live in the Respiratory System Infographic: https://bit.ly/46Da0WE
Infection Control Actions to Stop the Spread of Respiratory Viruses: https://bit.ly/3O1UXhM
Ventilation in Healthcare Settings: https://bit.ly/3QOYWjs

www.cdc.gov/ProjectFirstline

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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