WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES

Infection Preventionist Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, November 10, 2026

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Series Objectives

- Encourage learning, growth, and networking
- Provide non-regulatory education and information
- Discuss topics relevant to new infection preventionists (IPs)

Today's Discussion

- Describe the risks associated with health care laundry.
- Review best practices for handling and storing health care laundry.
- Share a tool infection preventionists can use for assessing laundry practices in health care facilities.

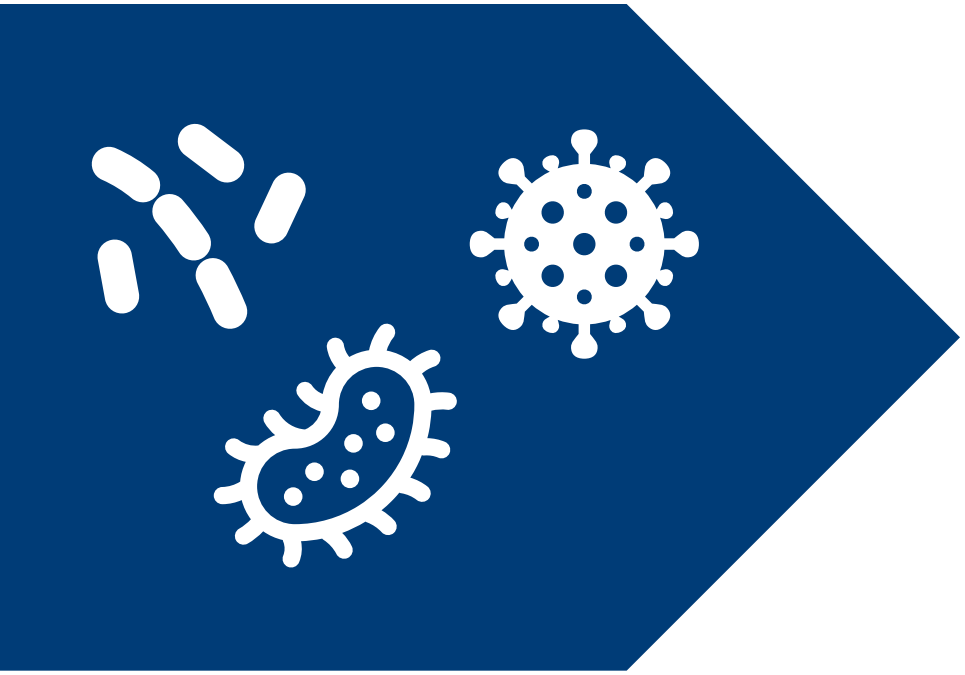
Health Care Laundry

What is Health Care Laundry?

Health care laundry includes:

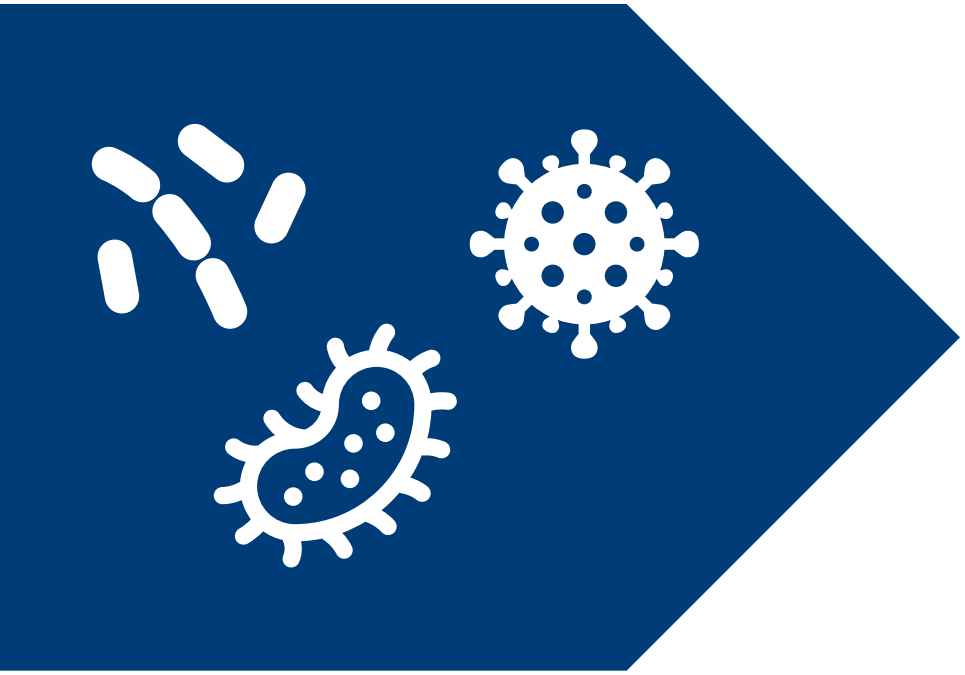
- Bed sheets
- Blankets
- Towels
- Personal clothing
- Patient apparel
- Uniforms
- Scrub suits
- Gowns
- Drapes for surgical procedures

Infection Risk



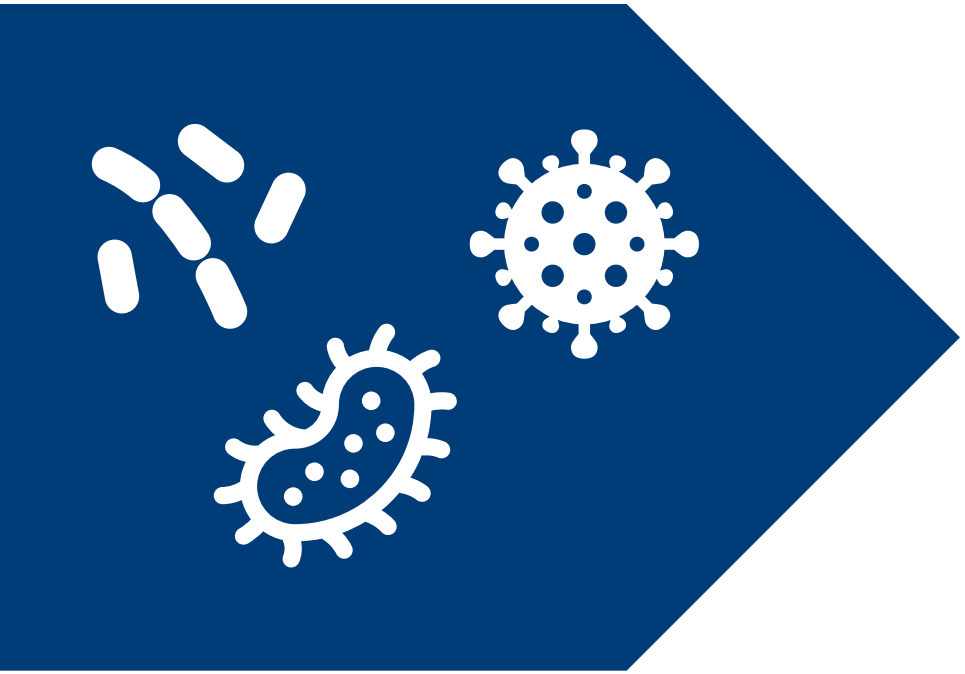
- Contaminated laundry in health care facilities can be a source of disease transmission.
- Laundry can become contaminated from environmental or human sources.

Environmental Sources



- Washing machines
- Transportation vehicles
- Floors

Human Sources



- Improper personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Poor hand hygiene
- Improper management of laundry

Best Practices

Soiled laundry area

Clean laundry area

Transporting laundry

Storing laundry

PPE

Hand hygiene

Soiled Laundry Area

- Create clear delineation from the clean side.
- Maintain negative air pressure relative to the clean side.
- Regularly disinfect work surfaces.
- Perform regular maintenance of equipment.
- Ensure wash temperature is appropriate.

Clean Laundry Area

- Create clear delineation from the soiled side.
- Maintain positive air pressure relative to the soiled side.
- Regularly disinfect work surfaces and laundry carts.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Minimize use of fans.



Transporting Laundry

- Maintain separation of clean and dirty laundry.
- Keep clean laundry covered and move to an appropriate storage area as soon as possible.
- Packaging for laundry received from outside the facility should be sufficient to protect from contamination.



Storing Laundry

- Store clean laundry separate from dirty laundry.
- Store clean laundry in closed cabinets, covered carts, or a room designed specifically for clean laundry.
- Follow a first in, first out process.



PPE

- Exam gloves, utility gloves, fluid resistant gowns, and eye protection should be readily available.
- Wear reusable gowns once and then place into soiled laundry.
- Follow standard precautions.



Hand Hygiene

- Hand washing should be performed in a sink separate from the utility sink.
- Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) should be available and not expired.
- Sinks should be part of the water management plan.



Steps for Facilities to Take

- ✓ Develop policies.
- ✓ Thoroughly train laundry staff.
- ✓ Incorporate the laundry department into the infection prevention program.
- ✓ Audit practices of laundry staff.
- ✓ Regularly perform environmental rounding.

IP Starter Kit

- Interactive, web-based resource.
- Background information, resources, and templates.
- Covers topics applicable to IPs across care settings.



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Send your questions and topic suggestions.

Submit your ideas to Ashley O'Keefe at Ashley.Okeefe@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Upcoming Lunch and Learn Session

Date: Tuesday, December 8, 2026

Topic: Spaulding Criteria