

Facilitated Discussion Guide

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization

Use the talking points below to engage your colleagues and others within your jurisdiction in a short, focused, and educational discussion. Facilitator notes included throughout this resource will provide tips for facilitating your discussion.

1. Share the objectives

Facilitator notes: Explain that today's infection prevention and control (IPC) educational session will be covering cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization. Share the objectives with the group so they know what information will be covered and what they can hope to gain from the session.

- **Introduce** the concept of cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization in a health care setting.
- **Discuss** cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization methods and best practices.

2. Introduce the topics

Facilitator notes: Open the discussion by asking the group why they think cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization is important for IPC. After some discussion with the group, share the below key points about cleaning, disinfection, and sterilizations and how they differ. When sharing, it may be helpful to connect these points to ideas the group just shared, relevant experiences, or happenings going on within your jurisdiction.

- Proper cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization are critical to ensuring a safe health care environment and use of medical devices.

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/cleaning.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/disinfection-methods/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/sterilization/index.html>

Facilitator note: It may be helpful to visit each of the linked webpages to provide additional details on cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization.

- Improper cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes has led to infection control breaches, exposures, and outbreaks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/settings/outpatient/outbreaks-patient-notifications.html>

Facilitator note: If needed, expand on what an infection control breach, exposure, or outbreak is. For example, a patient may be exposed to an infectious agent due to the improper cleaning, disinfection, or sterilization of shared medical equipment.

- While cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization may look different depending on the setting, there are specific processes that must be followed.

3. Expand on the topics

Facilitator notes: Now that you've introduced the topic, share more detailed information with the group using the key points below. It may be helpful to bring up the resources that are linked and walk through them together. You can use these resources to further deepen the conversation and add more points of discussion.

- Proper methods and manufacturer’s instructions for use must be followed when cleaning, disinfecting, or sterilizing.
<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/tables/table1.html>
- Reading the disinfectant label and following the proper contact time is critical to kill germs.
<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/HowToReadALabel-Infographic-508.pdf>
Facilitator note: *The linked document is a great resource to walk through together and can serve as an additional educational activity.*
- Contact time refers to the amount of time a disinfectant being used must remain wet on the item or surface in order to achieve adequate disinfection. If the surface dries before the end of that time, you must re-apply the disinfectant so it remains wet for that full contact time.
- Debris must first be removed from the surface or item before disinfecting it for the disinfectant to be effective. It’s also important to clean and disinfect an item prior to sterilization.
- Health care and environmental services staff should be trained in proper cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes and techniques for all items they will be responsible to clean, disinfect, or sterilize.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0pH_E0swwI
Facilitator note: *You may wish to view this 4-minute video for additional context on proper cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization and the value of the environmental services team.*

4. Discuss with your colleagues

Facilitator notes: *Now that you’ve introduced and reviewed the topic in more detail, this is a great time to pause, answer questions, and discuss as a group. It’s encouraged that you use this discussion to brainstorm ways your LTHD can help improve practices within your jurisdiction and health care facilities. Below are some example questions you may discuss; you may also wish to discuss topics specific to your jurisdiction.*

- Who can health care partners work with to improve cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes in their facilities?
- How can we better work with health care partners to improve cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization processes?

5. Wrap up and reinforce

Facilitator notes: *Following the discussion, you may wish to reiterate the ideas and next steps that the group suggested. Invite the group to ask any additional remaining questions about the topic. Share the key takeaways below to wrap up the session.*

- Cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization are all important processes to prevent the spread of infection in health care settings.
- Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use to ensure appropriate cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization occurs so surfaces and items are safe for use.

