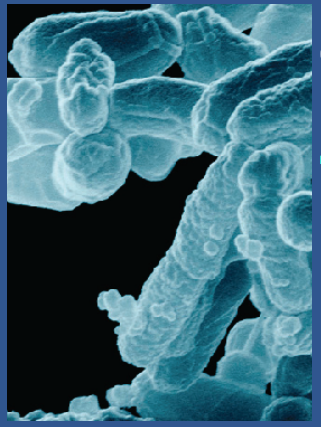
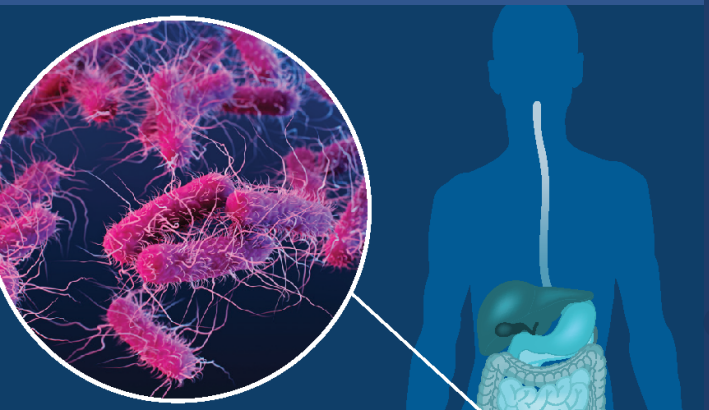


GERMS CAN LIVE IN THE GUT

- The gut is fllled with bacteria and some yeasts, which are part of a healthy immune system.
- Most gut germs don't cause problems in healthy people, but they can cause infection when they spread.
- Germs in stool can spread onto hands and skin when wiping or changing a diaper.

Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk

- Hand hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment (gloves and gowns)
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Textile management
- Waste management



GERMS CAN LIVE ON WET AND DRY SURFACES, AND MEDICAL DEVICES

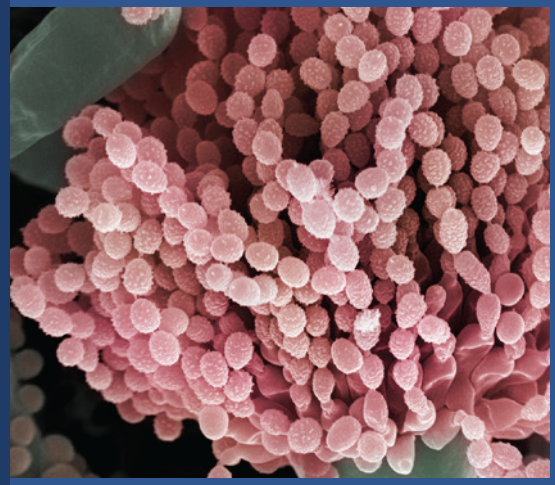
- Tap water is safe to drink, but is not sterile.
- Most of the time, germs in tap water aren't a problem, but they can cause illness in patients with very weak immune systems.
- Germs in water can spread to surfaces and people and cause harm.
- If medical instruments and equipment (e.g., devices and central lines) get wet, bacteria can grow. When those devices are used, that bacteria can then get into a patient's body or blood and cause infection.
- Germs found on the body, in the air, and in stool can often be found on dry surfaces, and some can live for a long time.
- Dry surfaces include "high-touch" surfaces like bed rails, door handles, and light switches. They also include countertops, bed curtains, foors, and things that might not be touched as often.
- Germs from dry surfaces can also get onto devices that are used on or in patients.
- When a device, like a pulse oximeter, is used on a patient's body to provide care, any germs on that device can be spread to places in or on the patient's body.
- When a device is put into a patient's body, like an IV needle, endoscope, or artificial hip, any germs on the device can spread into the body.
- If not handled correctly, shared medical devices can spread germs from one patient to another.

Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Device sterilization
- Hand hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment (gloves and gowns)

WHERE IS THE RISK?

Know where germs live to stop the spread and protect patients



PROJECT FIRST LINE

CDC's National Training Collaborative for Healthcare Infection Prevention & Control

GERMS LIVE ON THE SKIN

Germs spread through touch.

- Many germs grow on healthy skin.
- Germs on skin can get onto surfaces, other people, and things that will touch other people.

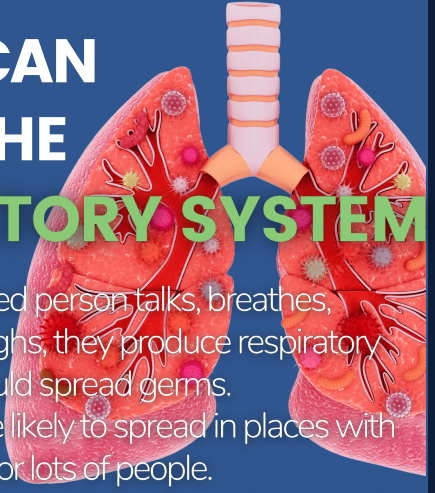
Germs spread by bypassing or breaking down the body's defenses.

- Healthcare tasks often involve breaking the skin.
- Breaking the skin – from putting in an IV, drawing blood, surgery, or trauma – creates a pathway for germs to spread into the body.

Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk

- Hand hygiene
- Appropriate glove use
- Injection safety
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Source control (covering cuts and wounds)

GERMS CAN LIVE IN THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM



- When an infected person talks, breathes, sneezes, or coughs, they produce respiratory droplets that could spread germs.
- Germs are more likely to spread in places with poor ventilation or lots of people.
- Germs in the nose and mouth can be spread to the skin and hands when people touch their faces, which can then spread to surfaces or other people.

Germs That Can Live in the Respiratory System

- Pseudomonas
- Staphylococcus aureus (staph, including MRSA) (tip of the nose)
- Viruses, like influenza and SARS-CoV-2

Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk

- Hand hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment (respirators, eye protection)
- Source control (masking)
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette • Ventilation

PROJECT FIRSTLINE

Learn how to stop their spread:
WWW.CDC.GOV/PROJECTFIRSTLINE

GERMS CAN LIVE IN THE BLOOD

- Viruses like HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C can spread in healthcare when contaminated blood is on a sharp item.
- If that item causes a cut or break in someone else's skin (e.g., an accidental needlestick), germs can spread to that person and cause a new infection.
- Reusing needles or syringes is especially risky because germs in the blood can spread from one person to another.
- Blood in the environment – like on linens or a device – grows bacteria and spreads via touch or devices.

Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk

- Hand hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment (gloves, gowns, eye protection)
- Safe injections
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Textile management