



## What Infection Preventionists Need to Know About Sinks, Drains, and Plumbing

**Sinks and drains can become contaminated with water-associated organisms, such as through the formation of biofilm (germs that stick together). Patients can become exposed to these organisms via water splashes.**



### **Best Practices for Sinks**

- Select sinks with offset drains and sufficient depth to prevent splashing
- Remove aerators (mesh covering) if present
- Ensure patient supplies or personal items are not stored under or in the sink "splash zone" (about 3 feet surrounding sink)
- Don't put blood, body fluids, medications, or liquid nutrition down the sink (use appropriate waste receptacle)



### **Best Practices for Toilets and Hoppers**

- Install and use toilet and hopper covers
- Close covers on toilets and hoppers before flushing
- If you can't use a cover, close the door before flushing



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Control Risk Assessment (WICRA)**



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risk of MDRO spread from water**

## Examples of Water-associated Organisms in Plumbing

- Gram-negative bacteria such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, *Klebsiella spp.*, and *Legionella pneumophila*
- Nontuberculous mycobacteria
- Fungi such as *Aspergillus fumigatus*



## Patients can be exposed to contaminated water via:

- |           |                          |                               |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Sinks   | • Humidification devices | • Indoor decorative fountains |
| • Drains  | • Mechanical ventilators | • Lactation equipment         |
| • Showers | • Endoscopes             | • Enteral feeding             |
| • Toilets | • Heater-cooler devices  | • Bathing procedures          |
| • Hoppers | • Ice machines           | • Oral care                   |

### Notes:

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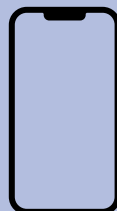
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Scan here to learn more about the role of CNAs in environmental cleaning  
Tip: Train CNAs to help each other monitor the splash zone!

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