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TAKE 5! Fast reads for busy IPs.

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Norovirus Increases Across U.S.

As cases of norovirus increase across the country, so does the likelihood of healthcare-associated noro outbreaks. My experience with these nasty, persistent outbreaks were primarily in behavioral health settings, where we see group activities, including eating, therapy & even exercising. Outbreaks can occur in any setting, but we also need to be prepared in long term care facilities, where communal activities also take place.

Norovirus is a small non-enveloped virus, meaning it is more challenging to eradicate in the environment. Ensure your disinfectants are on the [EPA's List G](#). Note that some dilutable disinfectants may require a longer contact time and/or different dilution ratios if combating norovirus. Reach out to me or your Diversey rep if you need help!



Find My Rep

In the Lit

One of the most exciting publications thus far in 2023 is the [SHEA/IDSA/APIC Practice Recommendation: Strategies to prevent healthcare-associated infections through hand hygiene: 2022 Update](#). The compendium is a collaborative effort and is currently an open-access document, meaning you don't need to be a SHEA or IDSA member to read & save it to your computer.

You may consider using this updated resource when it comes time to review your hand hygiene policies & procedures. The two new "essential practices" speak to glove use & reduction of environmental contamination associated with sinks and sink drains (including language related to splash guards).

There is also clarifying language surrounding the use of soap & water for *C. diff* and norovirus **outbreaks**, including a recommendation to not prohibit the use of alcohol-based hand rubs for these infections.

IP Tech Tip

Do you struggle to stay organized either at home or at work? IPs are inherent multitaskers, but even the best multitaskers need help staying organized.

As I discuss in the [March APIC Five Second Rule podcast](#), I've used Google & Microsoft (To-Do) task apps to keep track of my to-dos. In Gmail, you can actually add emails directly to your Google task list by clicking on the checkmark symbol at the top of an email.

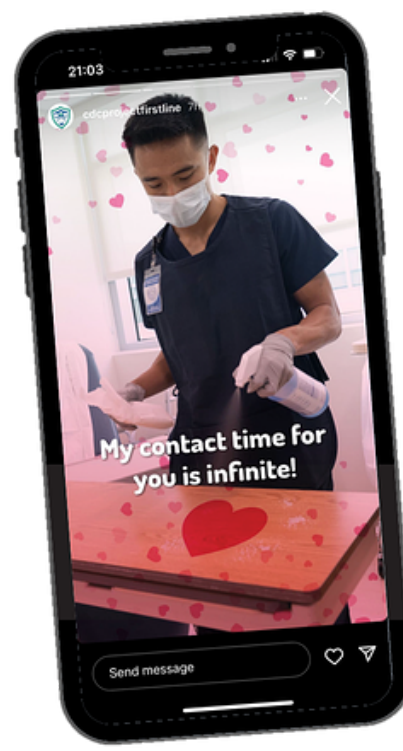
I categorize my tasks as low, medium, or high and have a separate list for each. High-priority tasks would be anything to do with patient or employee safety, building emergencies, outbreaks, exposures, etc. Medium task deadlines might be a couple of months away. Lower priority tasks may be reading an article or watching a webinar.

Putting the app on your phone helps when you wake up in the middle of the night with an idea or don't want to forget something important!

Meme of the Month!

CDC's [Project Firstline](#) brought their A-game to Valentine's Day! My personal fav (no surprise) was a romantic contact time shout-out! If you don't yet follow [@cdcprojectfirstline](#) on your social media sites, I highly recommend doing so!

There are so many great visual resources to share during your educational campaigns, or even to add in your regular email communications to staff. Maybe even start your next infection prevention & control committee meeting with a smile? Remember, a picture says a thousand words!



Rebecca's New IP Risk Assessment Resource

In response to requests identified via APIC's IP Talk platform, I recorded a [40-minute video](#), describing the annual processes IPs perform to assess risk, build preparedness plans and goals, and finally assess or summarize those achievements and opportunities. Many new IPs, and those who are the only IP for their healthcare facility, struggle to perform these activities. I've received wonderful feedback & wanted to share it with all of our Diversey IP contacts.

Accreditation & state surveyors may tell IPs their plans are insufficient but don't always provide guidance or resources on how to improve them. Remember, this video does not replace or override your current facility's policies and procedures. It is intended to be a general guide. As an infection preventionist, remember that these plans and templates must be individualized to your facility's unique needs and identified risks.