

Tool: Transmission Routes

What is it?

This tool educates people about fecal-oral transmission routes using the F-Diagram and how controls can be used to block the disease transmission routes. The name “F-Diagram” only works in English and stands for feces, food, flies, fields, fingers, fluids and face. Call this game Transmission Routes or something similar in another language.

Why use it?

This tool can help participants discover and analyze how diarrheal disease can be spread through the environment.

How to use it

1. Print and cut out the cards before starting. Activity cards for different regions are available at: <http://resources.cawst.org>
2. Introduce the topic and start with the pictures of feces and the child’s face. Explain that there are many ways in which pathogens can be “transmitted” from the feces to the mouth.
3. Divide participants into groups of 3-5 people. Hand out the white cards and arrows to each group. Explain that they should use the white cards and arrows to create as many transmission routes as they can to show how pathogens can find their way from the feces to the child.
4. When the groups have made their diagrams, ask each group to show and explain its diagram to the other groups. Let them respond to questions raised by the other groups.
5. Discuss the similarities and differences between the various diagrams. Encourage discussion to find out why participants placed the pictures in the particular order and ensure everyone understands what a “transmission route” is.
6. Facilitate a discussion to help the group use this new knowledge to examine its own situation. Discuss and identify:
 - The transmission routes in the community
 - The problem areas and behaviours that are putting people at risk of infection.
7. Then ask each group to identify practices that can break the transmission routes; the transmission barriers. Hand out the yellow cards to each group. Explain that they should use the yellow cards to block the transmission of disease. It is useful to have blank paper and pens so that the group can create its own blocks if the pre-cut cards do not cover all situations.
8. When the groups have made their diagrams, ask each group to show and explain its diagram to the other groups. Let them respond to questions raised by the other groups.
9. Discuss the similarities and differences between the various diagrams. Encourage discussion to find out why participants placed the barrier cards where they did and ensure everyone understands how that barrier works.
10. Encourage discussion to find out why participants placed the pictures in the particular order and ensure everyone understands the meaning of “transmission route”.

Trainer notes

- The F-Diagram only works in English so it should be called Transmission Routes or a similar name in other languages.
- Some participants may at first be shocked at the content of this activity. There may be some disbelief that feces can be transmitted to the mouth. The best way to deal with this situation is to get the group working together as quickly as possible. Those participants who are more receptive than others will help the disbelievers to become more involved.
- Do not be concerned if the groups do not identify all the fecal-oral routes. It is enough if they have identified some of the routes.
- Do not prompt or direct the groups when they are trying to create their diagrams.
- If the whole group does not manage to clearly identify the transmission routes, then try to find out why. It may be useful to hold a group discussion to evaluate the activity, which then can be tried a second time.
- Put the diagrams on the wall so it is easy for everyone to see and refer to later on.
- This activity has been adapted to investigate diseases transmitted through animal excreta. The Animal Excreta Transmission Routes activity is available at: <http://resources.cawst.org>

Adapted from Wood S, Sawyer R, Simpson-Hebert M. (1998) PHAST Step-by-step Guide: A Participatory Approach for the Control of Diarrhoeal Disease. Geneva, World Health Organization. www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/envsan/phastep/en/index.html