



Cleaning hands with soap and water

- Turn on tap
- Wet hands with water
- Apply soap
- Lather for 45 seconds rubbing all surfaces of hands and wrists
- Rinse under running water with fingers pointing down
- Pat dry with towel

Questions?

For more information, contact your family doctor, or ask for the Infection Control Practitioner at your local facility.

Site	Infection Control
Vancouver: VGH, UBC, GF Strong, George Pearson	604-875-4111 Ext. 54002
Richmond Health Services	604-244-5156
Lions Gate Hospital	604-341-3908
Coastal: Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton, Sechelt, Powell River	604-815-9339
VCH Public Health	604-244-5156
Providence Health Care	604-485-3214

Clostridium Difficile Infection (CDI)

Information for Patients,
Families & Visitors

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What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile (C. difficile) is a bacteria (germ) that normally lives in the gastrointestinal tract (bowel). Some people have C. difficile in their body, but are not sick from it. This is called colonization.

Sometimes if a person is given antibiotics, some bacteria in their bowel are killed but C. difficile is left behind. C. difficile can produce toxins and cause an infection.

What are the symptoms of a Clostridium difficile infection (CDI)?

- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal pain/tenderness
- Fever
- Loss of appetite

Who is at risk of getting CDI?

- Anyone taking antibiotics
- People in hospital and those with a serious underlying condition.
- Older adults
- People receiving some kinds of chemotherapy

How is it spread?

C. difficile can produce “spores” that live in the environment for a long time. It can spread from hand to mouth by unclean hands and by touching contaminated equipment or surfaces.

Is there treatment for CDI?

CDI will sometimes stop on its own. Usually it requires specific antibiotic treatment.

Certain antibiotics can increase the risk of getting CDI or of developing complications. Your doctor should review all antibiotic treatment to see if it is necessary.

What will be different in hospital?

- In the hospital you will be placed on Contact Plus Precautions to prevent the spread of C. difficile to others.
- Healthcare workers will wear a gown and gloves when providing your care until you no longer have diarrhea.
- All healthcare workers must clean their hands with soap and water before entering and when leaving your room. Do not hesitate to remind healthcare workers to clean their hands.
- C. difficile is different from other germs because the spores it can produce are difficult to remove with alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is why soap and water is preferred.
- Your room will be specially cleaned to remove the spores.
- Your visitors and family members will wear a gown and gloves if they help with your care.

What can I do to prevent others from getting CDI?

- Clean your hands often with soap and water, especially when you leave your room, after you use the bathroom and before eating.
- Remind your family and visitors to clean their hands before and after they visit.
- You, your family members and visitors should not use the communal patient kitchen until you are completely symptom-free.

What else should be done when I go home?

- Clean hands after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Maintain good personal hygiene, bathe regularly with soap and water and wear clean clothes.
- Wash soiled clothing/linen separately in the washing machine with hot water and detergent. Use bleach if the fabric is compatible and machine dry.
- When having diarrhea, clean the bathroom with detergent followed by a diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water). Be sure to clean any object that has been contaminated with diarrhea (faucet handles, flush handles, light switches, door knobs).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your home often