

# Clostridioides difficile

## Information for Patients, Families, and Visitors

### What is Clostridioides difficile?

Clostridioides difficile (C. diff) is a bacteria (germ) that normally lives in the gastrointestinal tract (bowel). Some people have C. diff in their body, but are not sick from it. This is called colonization. Sometimes if a person is given antibiotics, good bacteria in their bowel are killed but C. diff is left behind and can grow out of control and cause infection.

### What are the symptoms?

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



### Who is at risk of getting it?

- Anyone taking antibiotics
- Older adults
- People receiving chemotherapy
- People in hospital and those with serious underlying health problems



### How is it spread?

C. difficile produces “spores” that live in the environment for a long time. A person can get sick when the germ is spread from hand to mouth by:

- Contact with unclean hands
- Touching dirty equipment
- Touching dirty surfaces
- Contact with body fluids



### Is there treatment for it?

- Sometimes, C. diff will stop on its own.
- Often C. diff requires treatment with specific antibiotic medications.
- Certain antibiotics can increase the risk of getting C. diff or developing complications – your doctor will review all your antibiotic treatments to make sure they are necessary.
- Take antibiotics as prescribed by your doctor.

### What can I do to prevent others from getting it?

- Clean your hands often with soap and water:
  - Before eating
  - After using the bathroom
  - Before leaving your room
- Remind your family members and visitors to clean their hands before and after they visit.

## How to wash your hands with soap and water:

1

Turn on the tap and wet hands with warm water



2

Apply soap



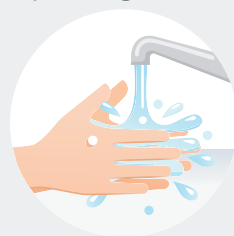
3

Lather for 30 seconds rubbing all surfaces of hands and wrists



4

Rinse under running water with fingers pointing down



5

Pat dry with towel



## How to Prevent the Spread of Infection in Healthcare Facilities and Home

### What will happen if I am admitted to hospital or I live in Long-Term Care?

- You will be placed on Contact Plus Precautions to prevent the spread of C. diff to others. You will remain on Contact Plus Precautions until your symptoms resolve.
- Using soap and water to wash your hands is the best way to clean your hands.
- All health care providers must clean their hands when entering and leaving your room.
- Healthcare staff will wear a gown and gloves when providing care.
- Your family members/visitors must clean their hands when entering and leaving your room.
- Your family members and visitors will wear a gown and gloves if they help with your care.
- You, your family members and visitors should not use the communal kitchen. Please ask staff for assistance to access food and beverages.

### What will happen if I am attending an outpatient clinic?

- Let your healthcare provider know that you are being treated for C. diff.
- Let your healthcare provider know if you are incontinent of stool – your healthcare provider may choose to meet virtually or to re-schedule your appointment.
- Clean your hands when entering and exiting the healthcare facility.
- Your healthcare provider may wear a gown and gloves when providing your care.
- Your healthcare provider will clean their hands before and after providing your care.

### What will happen when I go home?

- 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 handle, light switches, door knobs).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your home.