



CAN CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE BE TRANSMITTED TO FAMILY AND VISITORS?

- Yes, but the best protection is good handwashing before and after visiting any patient in hospital
- Healthy people who are not taking antibiotics are at very low risk of getting C. diff

WHAT SHOULD I DO AT HOME?

- Take all prescribed antibiotics until finished
- Practice good handwashing especially after using the bathroom
- Tell your doctor you had C. diff

IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IF THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR HANDS

**HAND HYGIENE
THE BEST
WAY TO PREVENT
INFECTION**

HAND HYGIENE

Special care must be paid to handwashing, as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. **Good hand hygiene includes:**

- Use warm running water and soap
- Remove jewelry
- Wet hands with warm water
- Apply soap to hands
- Spend at least **15 -30** seconds lathering and washing hands
- Rub hands together, paying attention to finger tips, around rings and thumbs
- Rinse thoroughly
- Pat hands dry with a paper towel
- Use the paper towel to turn off the taps
- Dispose of paper towel in garbage

REMIND VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR HANDS

**Alcohol-based Hand Rub is not effective against C. diff.
You *must* wash your hands with soap and water.**

Developed: July 2014
Revised: March 2017



CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. DIFF)

**Information for Patients,
Residents, Families &
Visitors**

**INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM**

WHAT IS C. DIFF?

Clostridium difficile (*C. diff*) is a bacteria that can sometimes be found in the intestinal tract.

- About 3-5% of people carry it without any symptoms. This is known as colonization
- In some people *C. diff* can cause diarrhea or more serious infections such as colitis

HOW IS C. DIFF DIAGNOSED?

- If you have symptoms, your doctor will ask for a stool sample to be sent to the Laboratory for *C. difficile* testing
- It is important to tell your Doctor if you have taken antibiotics in the last few months

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS?

- Watery diarrhea, sometimes with blood, mucus or pus
- Abdominal pain, tenderness and cramping
- Fever
- Nausea

ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE AT RISK OF GETTING C. DIFF?

- Sometimes when an antibiotic is given for a previous infection, the *C. diff* will over-grow and produce enough toxins to cause illness
- Patients who have prolonged hospital stays
- Patients who are seriously ill
- Persons who are immunosuppressed
- The elderly

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR C. DIFF?

- **Current** antibiotics may be stopped
- Special antibiotics will be prescribed
- You must take these special antibiotics as prescribed until they are finished, even if the diarrhea stops
- If the diarrhea does not stop or comes back, see your doctor

You should not take anti-diarrheal medications. The toxins must be excreted to prevent more severe damage to the bowel

HOW IS C-DIFF SPREAD?

- *C. diff* is shed in stool. The germ survives on surfaces and objects for a long time
- *C. diff* can be spread on the soiled hands of caregivers
- Any surfaces, patient equipment, and personal items that come in contact with stool can be a source of infection

HOW CAN WE STOP THE SPREAD?

Special Precautions will be taken while you are in hospital.

- A sign will be posted
- You **will** need to stay in your room
- Wash your hands carefully after using the bathroom
- You must always wash your hands if you must leave your room
- Staff and visitors will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care
- All staff and visitors must **wash** their hands when they enter or leave your room
- Items brought into your room must stay in the room. Such items include: equipment (commodes, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.) chairs and food
- *C. diff* can live on objects in the room so it is important to clean items before they are taken out of the room. **A special cleaner will be used in your room**

WHEN WILL SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS BE DISCONTINUED?

- Special precautions may be stopped when you have been without symptoms for at least 48 hours, (i.e. formed or normal stool for you)
- It is not necessary to send a repeat stool sample if the diarrhea has stopped and the treatment is completed.