



CLOSTRIDIoidES DIFFICILE

Information Sheet for Patients and Visitors

What is *Clostridioides difficile*?

Clostridioides difficile (also known as *C. difficile* or *C. diff*) is one of the many bacteria sometimes found in the intestines. Antibiotics can be lifesaving medications but can also disrupt the good bacteria in a person's intestines. When this happens, *C. diff* (if present) may grow to unusually high levels in the intestines and make toxins. The toxins can then cause diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and loss of appetite.

How is *C. diff* spread?

C. diff germs and their spores are present in the stool of a person with a *C. diff* infection. Others can become infected if they touch a surface (e.g. toilet.) covered with *C. diff*, and then touch their mouths and ingest it. Health care providers can also spread this germ if they do not clean their hands (appropriately) prior to caring for their patients.

What special precautions are needed for *C. diff*?

- You will be placed in a room by yourself with a Contact Precautions sign posted on the door indicating that anyone coming in the room to provide care must wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves.
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly
- Activities outside of your room may be restricted
- Hand washing is very important for yourself and for anyone providing care to you
- Your visitors are also required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and the linen hamper located in your room. Then they must clean their hands.

What will happen at home when I have *C. diff*?

- Wash your hands well after using the toilet, before you make food and before you eat.
- There are specific antibiotics used to treat *C. diff*. If you are prescribed an antibiotic it is important that you take the entire course as prescribed. Speak to your doctor if you have questions.
- Make sure others that use the bathroom wash their hands well afterwards.
- Your caregivers should wash their hands routinely and after providing care to you
- If you are having diarrhea while at home, you may want to use your own set of washcloths and towels.
- *C. diff* bacteria can be destroyed by most household cleaning products or diluted household bleach.

Your health care provider will review good hygiene practices with you before you go home. It is very important that you take all your medication as prescribed by your doctor. Check with your community pharmacist before selecting any non-prescription medications. You should not use any drugs from the drugstore that will stop your diarrhea (e.g. Imodium). If diarrhea persists or comes back, contact your family doctor.