

Clostridioides Difficile Infection

Infection Prevention and Control Fact Sheet for patients and carers

What is Clostridioides difficile?

Clostridioides difficile is a bacteria (germ) that can cause an infection in the bowel which may result in diarrhoea. Infection can occur in hospital patients and usually occurs in patients who have received recent antibiotic therapy. This is because antibiotics change the normal bacteria in the bowel allowing Clostridioides difficile to multiply and cause diarrhoea.

What are the symptoms of Clostridioides difficile?

Diarrhoea is the most common symptom but stomach pain and fever may also occur. Most people will make a full recovery from Clostridioides difficile, but occasionally it can cause severe illness.

How does it spread?

Clostridioides difficile can be spread by people's hands and from contaminated equipment and the environment. You can acquire Clostridioides difficile in hospital however you may have had it in your bowel before admission without it doing any harm. This is called colonisation. If you have been given antibiotics or other medication, this may allow Clostridioides difficile to multiply and cause diarrhoea.

How can I prevent other people from getting Clostridioides difficile?

Alcohol hand gel will **not** remove Clostridioides difficile from your hands

- Wash hands with soap and water especially after using the toilet and before eating
- If you have difficulty in getting to the sink, staff will provide you with a bowl of water and soap / or hand wipes
- Ensure that staff and visitors wash their hands with soap and water before leaving the room
- Only bring what you require into hospital. This will stop your room from becoming cluttered and make it easier for staff to clean the environment

How is it treated?

You will be given a course of antibiotics to treat the infection. Occasionally symptoms can return and you will need alternative treatment.



What happens if you are diagnosed with Clostridioides difficile while in hospital?

If you have diarrhoea:

- You will be moved into a single side room and asked not to visit any communal areas
- Staff will wear yellow aprons and gloves when caring for you
- Staff will increase the frequency of cleaning within the room to twice a day with a disinfectant
- You will be seen daily by medical staff.
- These precautions will remain in place whilst you are in hospital, until you are 48 hours symptom free and have passed a normal stool
- As soon as your general condition allows you can be discharged to your home



What about visitors? Are friends and family at risk?

Clostridioides difficile is not usually a risk to healthy people.

We would advise that your visitors:

- Wash their hands with soap and water before leaving your room
- Visitors are not required to wear gloves and aprons unless carrying out personal care
- Do not eat food or drink at the bedside when visiting
- Do not sit on bed
- Do not bring babies or infants when visiting
- Do not move around ward from patient to patient and if visitors are visiting more than one patient they should visit you last

For more information you or your carer can speak to the nurse looking after you.