

Can *C. difficile* diarrhoea come back?

Yes, some patients may get diarrhoea again. Please contact your GP if you develop diarrhoea after you are discharged from hospital and let him know that you had *C. difficile* recently. If you need antibiotics for another illness please tell your GP that you recently had *C. difficile*.

If I have *C. difficile* diarrhoea at home how do I stop my family from catching it?

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Be strict with your personal hygiene-do not share personal items such as towels and face cloths.
- Machine wash soiled laundry separately from other washing on the hottest wash cycle possible.
- Tell your family or carers to wash their hands carefully with soap and water after caring for you.
- Try to avoid using the same toilet that your family members use. If this is not possible, ensure that the toilet is cleaned and disinfected with household bleach after you use.
- Clean surfaces in bathrooms regularly with household detergents. If you have had diarrhoea, then disinfect with a mixture of bleach and water as instructed on the container. Pay special attention to sink taps, flush handle, toilet seats and toilet bowl.

How to wash your hands properly?

1. Wet your hands under running water
2. Lather with soap
3. Rub all parts of your hands, including the wrists
4. Rinse well under running water
5. Dry completely

It should take a round 30 seconds to wash your hands properly.



If a patient has *c.difficile*, we may share that information with other hospitals. The Patient should also inform their carers of the result on admission to another hospital. This will help to stop the spread of *c.difficile*

Tell the Clinical Nurse Manager, doctor or nurse looking after you if you would like to speak to a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team and they will contact us.

We have made every possible effort to make sure that all the information provided in this leaflet is true, accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

Version 10

Reference : HSE (Health Service Executive) & HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)



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PATIENT
INFORMATION
LEAFLET

Clostridioides Difficile C.difficile



What is *Clostridioides difficile*?

Clostridioides difficile

(also known as *C. difficile* and *C. diff*) is a bacterium which is present as one of the 'normal' bacteria in the gut of up to 3% of healthy adults and 66% of children. *C. difficile* doesn't cause any problems in healthy people. It is kept in check by the normal "good" bacteria of the bowel. However, when you take an antibiotic, some of the "good" bacteria die causing the *C. difficile* bacteria to multiply and you may get an infection in your bowel. People over 65 years are more likely to get this infection. Some patients who have not had antibiotics may also still develop symptoms of infection.

What are the symptoms of *C. difficile*?

The symptoms may include:

- watery diarrhoea which has an unpleasant smell
- fever/temperature
- loss of appetite, nausea (feeling sick), stomach pain/tenderness.

How do I know I have *C. difficile*?

The microbiology laboratory tests diarrhoea stool samples for *C. difficile* in this hospital.

How is *C. difficile* spread?

When *C. difficile* causes diarrhoea it may contaminate the environment. The bacteria produce spores which can survive for a long time. These can be picked up on hands and passed into the stomach and bowel. If you don't have diarrhoea, *C. difficile* cannot be spread to other people.

How can *C. difficile* be prevented from spreading in hospital?

The Infection Prevention & Control Nurse will notify the ward manager or nurse in charge if *C. difficile* has been diagnosed in the laboratory. You may be moved to a single room with en-suite facilities for infection control precautions. A blue sign will be placed on your door. You will need isolation until you are symptom free for 48 hours and your bowel motions have returned to normal. Healthcare workers looking after you will be wearing aprons and gloves on entering your room. The healthcare worker will remove these items and wash their hands before leaving.

Hand washing is one of the key ways to control the spread of infection. Healthcare staff will wash their hands with soap and water before and after contact with you. If you notice a failure in this practice please feel free to ask them to do so.

What can I do to help?

- It is very important to tell your nurse or doctor if you have any of these symptoms, especially if you have taken antibiotics within the last 3 months.
- To prevent *C. difficile* from spreading, you, and your family members should wash your hands with soap and water often, especially after using the toilet

What treatment will I get if I have *C. difficile*?

In some cases, certain antibiotics may have caused the diarrhoea so you may have to stop taking them.

You may be given other antibiotics that will work against the *C. difficile* bacteria.

It is important to drink enough fluids so that you don't become dehydrated because of the diarrhoea.

Can I have visitors if I am infected with *C. difficile*?

Yes, you can have visitors as healthy people are at very little risk of getting *C. difficile* unless they are taking antibiotics.

Your visitors should wash their hands with soap and water after visiting you.

Your visitors will need to wear gloves and aprons if they are helping with your personal care.

Your visitors should sit on the chairs provided, not on your bed.

Your visitors should only use the public toilets.

How will I know when the *C. difficile* is no longer infectious?

Once the diarrhoea has stopped for at least 48 hours and your bowel motion is back to normal you are no longer infectious.

