



Patient & Family Information

Clostridoides (Clostridium) difficile – (C.diff)



What is Clostridoides difficile (C.diff / C.difficile)?

C.diff is one of the many kinds of germs (bacteria) that lives in the digestive tract (stomach, intestines and bowel).

What is a C.diff Infection (CDI)?

C.diff is the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in hospitals or long-term care (LTC) facilities. CDI occurs when antibiotics kill the good bacteria in your bowel and allow the *C.diff* bacteria to grow. When *C.diff* grows it produces toxins (poisons). The toxins can damage the bowel and may cause diarrhea. The main symptoms of a CDI are:

- Watery diarrhea
- Fever
- Belly pain or tenderness
- Nausea and loss of appetite

How is C.diff spread?

When a person has *C.diff*, the bacteria in the stool can spread to surfaces such as toilets, bedpans, commode chairs and bed rails. When patients, family members, and healthcare workers touch these objects, the *C.diff* gets on their hands or whatever part of their body touched the object. If a person ingests (eats) the germ from their unwashed hands, *C.diff* can cause an infection.

What special precautions are required for C.diff?

- You will stay in a room by yourself if possible. The door to your room may remain open.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind everyone who enters your room about the special precautions that must be taken, such as gowns and gloves.
- Visitors and staff must wash their hands with **soap and water** when entering and leaving your room. A sign on the doorframe will indicate the location of the sink designated for hand washing.
- Family and visitors should **not** assist with personal care such as toileting.
- You will not visit shared areas such as patient lounges, cafes, coffee shops or gift shops, etc. Ask your nurse if you need something from the nourishment room or extra supplies, like sheets.
- You will try and minimize the number of personal items in your room.
- You will wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom and before you leave your room.
- If you have uncontrolled diarrhea, you will be asked to remain in your room.

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How long will special precautions be necessary?

Special precautions will be discontinued when you have had at least 48 hours without symptoms of diarrhea.

What will happen at home?

Healthy people like your family, friends and caregivers are at very low risk for becoming infected with *C.diff* disease.

Practice good hand hygiene

- Everyone who might help you with your personal hygiene or with going to the toilet must wash their hands with soap and water for 15 seconds after contact with you.
- Wash your hands well after going to the bathroom, after handling soiled laundry, before you make any food and before you eat.

Cleaning the House

1. Use a regular household cleaner (according to instructions on the label) to clean commonly touched hard surfaces in the home (faucets, door handles, countertops, etc.). Pay **special attention** to areas such as the **toilet** and **bathroom sink**.
2. Disinfect the same surfaces using a diluted chlorine bleach solution (household bleach diluted with water)
 1. Dilute 1 part bleach with 9 parts water.
 2. Wet the surface well and clean using strong friction
 3. Allow the surface to air dry

*** Wipe surfaces moving from the cleanest area towards the dirtiest ***

Laundry

Wash clothes/fabric separately if they are heavily soiled with feces:

- Rinse off feces into the toilet
- Launder on a hot water cycle with soap
- Dry items in the dryer on high heat

Remember

- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses, or other care providers that you have *C.diff*. This will help prevent spread to others.
- It is very important to take all your medications as prescribed by your doctor. You should not take any drugs from the pharmacy to stop your diarrhea. If diarrhea persists, or comes back, contact your doctor.