

# Clostridioides Difficile

Infection Prevention

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about Clostridioides Difficile.

## What is Clostridioides Difficile?

Clostridioides difficile, also known as C diff is a bacterium that can be found in healthy people's gut. It can be found in 3% of healthy adults and 66% of babies with no symptoms occurring. It is harmful when there is an imbalance of the normal bacteria in the gut, whereby C diff becomes present in large numbers and alters the gut flora. This is usually when a person is taking antibiotics. This produces toxins that affect the lining of the bowel and cause symptoms of infection.

## How did I get C diff?

C diff can be transferred by the following ways:-

- Person to person hand contact is the main way of transfer
- It can be passed on by hand to mouth contact. If hands are not washed before eating or drinking, these spores can be ingested into the gut
- Faecal contamination of equipment
- Faecal contamination of the environment. C diff patients have associated diarrhoea which can excrete a large number of spores, which contaminate the area around the patient, their bed and toilet areas. These spores can live in environments for a long period
- It can be spread by touch with contaminated diarrhoea.

## How do I know if I am infected with C diff?

The symptoms of C diff may include:-

- Diarrhoea which can be watery, with an unpleasant smell
- Abdominal pain which can be cramping
- A high temperature
- Sometimes people feel nauseous and experience a loss of appetite
- Symptoms can vary from a few days to several weeks, but usually 7 to 10 days.

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

## How is C Diff Diagnosed?

C diff is diagnosed by sending a stool (poo) sample to the laboratory. The result informs us if C diff is present in the bowel and if toxins are produced. The result is normally available within 1 to 2 days.

## What are the complications?

Some people can become seriously unwell and develop severe C diff infection and the complications include:-

- Dehydration
- Low blood pressure
- Rapid heart rate
- Fever
- Inflammation of the bowel know as colitis.
- Kidney failure
- Blood or pus in the stool
- Weight loss
- Swollen abdomen
- Sepsis.

In these circumstances, closer supervision and monitoring would take place.

## Why do I need a side room?

You will be placed in a side room whilst you have diarrhoea, this will help limit the spread to other patients. C diff bacterium is passed out of faeces of people who are infected. This is in the form of spores which can contaminate the environment, surfaces, toilet areas, clothing, sheets and furniture; whilst you are experiencing diarrhoea. These spores are easily transferable through touch and people can pick up the spores by touching contaminated surfaces. Patients, visitors and health care practitioners can spread the infection to others through poor hand hygiene. Alcohol gel is not effective, so good hand hygiene with the use of soap and water is a must.

## How is C diff treated?

If you are taking antibiotics these will be stopped. You will find that your symptoms may subside following this. However, if your symptoms persist you will be given an antibiotic specifically to treat your C diff infection.

## How is the spread of C diff prevented?

It is important that you regularly wash your hands, with soap and water, especially important after going to the toilet and before preparing and eating food. It is important also if you are caring for a person with C diff that you wash your hands thoroughly after contact with them. All health professionals will wash their hands with soap and water before and after contact with you to prevent the spread of infection. They will wear aprons and gloves when carrying out your care.

The hospital will adhere to its strict rules on the use of antibiotics, ensuring they are used only when necessary to help reduce the number of patients at risk of contracting C diff, as well as strict hand washing practices, thorough cleaning of the environment, education and the implementation of infection prevention procedures.

## What about visitors and how can they prevent the spread of C diff to others and protect themselves?

- Visitors will be allowed to visit, but the elderly and people susceptible to infection may be at risk of picking up C diff
- Visitors will be asked by health professionals to wash their hands with soap and water before entering the room and on leaving
- Visitors are not required to wear gloves or an apron, but they must not sit on the bed
- Visitors will be asked to refrain from bringing food into the hospital or eat at the bedside of the person you are visiting
- Visitors will be asked not to use the patient's toilet during their visit
- Visitors should not visit the patient if they are unwell
- If visitors are well in themselves, there is little risk of catching C diff.

## How will I know my C diff has resolved?

Once your diarrhoea is improving, it is an indicator that your infection is settling. If your bowels have returned to normal and the diarrhoea has stopped, the infection will have resolved. You should have no further stool samples tests.

## Will C diff stop me going home?

The simple answer is no. You will be able to leave hospital when you are medically fit and discharged by the doctor. If your diarrhoea returns when you are at home, you need to contact your GP. The hospital will have informed your GP that you have had C diff whilst you were in hospital.

## How can I stop the spread of C diff once I am at home?

- Stay in your home for 48 hours once your symptoms have cleared
- Continue to wash your hands with soap and water before preparation of food, eating, drinking and after toilet use
- Make sure that you clean contaminated surfaces such as the toilet, toilet flush, door handles, light switches with a bleach based cleaner
- Do not share towels and washing aids
- Make sure contaminated clothes are washed separately from your other laundry at high temperatures.

## Other information

- It is important to finish the course of antibiotics you have been prescribed
- You can continue with paracetamol for stomach pain
- Make sure you keep yourself hydrated
- Contact your GP if your symptoms get worse.

## Who can I contact for further information?

If you have any questions, contact the nursing or medical team that are/were looking after you.

# Hand Washing Technique - Pictorial Guide.

The illustration below, of hand washing technique, should be followed for at least 20 seconds.



## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。