

What is *Clostridium difficile*?

C. diff is one of the many types of bacteria that can be found in feces (bowel movement).

What is CDAD?

Clostridium Difficile Associated Disease. CDAD occurs when antibiotics kill off your good bowel bacteria and allow C. diff to grow. When it does grow it produces toxins that then damage the bowel and cause symptoms.

What are the symptoms of C. diff Disease?

- Watery diarrhea
- Fever
- Abdominal pain or tenderness.

Some people may have C. diff however do not have diarrhea.

Does everyone who takes antibiotics get C diff?

No, there are other risk factors for becoming sick with C. diff. Frequent antibiotic usage, prolonged hospitalization, increased age, and underlying illness all contribute.

How does C. diff spread?

When a person has C. diff disease the bacteria from their bowels can contaminate surfaces such as toilets, bed rails, and handles. When touching these items our hands become contaminated. If we touch our mouth without washing our hands we can become infected. This is why we must use additional precautions.

What are additional precautions?

It is very important to contain the bacteria so it does not spread to others. We do this by:

1. Isolating C diff patients and putting a "Contact + Precautions" sign on the door.
2. Wearing a yellow long sleeved gown and gloves when entering the room to care for the patient.
3. Washing our hands before entering the room and after leaving the room.

What about family and visitors?

Family and visitors must first talk with a nurse before coming into the room. Young visitors should be closely supervised.

- All visitors must wash hands before entering the room. After leaving the room visitors must first wash hands with available waterless hand rub and then immediately visit the public bathroom to wash with soap and water.
- Any visitors providing direct care for the patient (bathing, washing, toileting, dressing changes, care for open areas, and feeding) must wear a yellow long sleeved gown and gloves.
- Visitors must not use the patient's bathroom.
- Visitors must not visit other patients in the hospital during the same trip. To ensure we do not spread the disease.

What can I do to help?

1. Remind **all** staff caring for you to wash their hands when they enter your room and when they leave.
2. If you are going for tests in another department tell staff transporting you that you have C. diff.
3. Wash your hands after you use the toilet, before you eat, after blowing your nose, after touching your dressing.
4. Talk to your nurse or doctor if you have any questions.

What should I do at home?

Healthy people like your family and friends who are not taking antibiotics are at a low risk of getting C. diff disease.

- Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing or eating food.
- Pay special attention to areas that may be contaminated with feces. Use an all purpose household cleaner and follow the label.
- Wash clothes/linen separately if contaminated with feces.