

Hand Hygiene

The best way you can protect yourself and those around you from infectious illnesses is to practice hand hygiene. If your hands are visibly dirty and after using the bathroom you should wash your hands with soap and water. All other times you can use waterless alcohol based hand rubs.

Proper Hand Washing

1. Turn on the tap and wet hands with warm water
2. Apply soap
3. Rub all over hands for at least 15 second (as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday")
4. Rinse well
5. Pat dry with a paper towel or
6. Turn off taps with paper towel

Proper Use of Alcohol Based Hand Rub

1. Use one or two pumps of alcohol based hand rub (about the size of a dime in the palm of your hand)
2. Rub all over hands until your hands are dry, usually this will take about 15 seconds.

What is Norfolk General Doing

Norfolk General Hospital carefully monitors patients for signs of infection. Any patients who may have an illness that could be passed to another person will be treated using special precautions including:

- Isolation in a private room, or a room with another patient who has the same illness
- Additional housekeeping
- Access to hand hygiene products for everyone
- Knowledgeable staff
- Infection Control policies and procedures

Additional Information

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care - www.health.gov.on.ca

Telehealth Ontario -1-866-797-0000

Norfolk General Hospital- www.ngh.on.ca



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Trillium Health Centre

What You Need to Know About Antibiotic-Associated Diarrhea

If you receive antibiotics while in hospital and you get diarrhea up to two months after going home, call your family doctor to determine if you have *Clostridium difficile* (C. Diff)

If you received antibiotics while in hospital or have been prescribed antibiotics that you are to take following discharge from hospital, please review this information on antibiotic-associated diarrhea.

Why Can Diarrhea Occur with Antibiotics?

- One of the most common side effects of antibiotics is diarrhea, which is usually mild
- *Clostridium difficile* is one of many germs (bacteria) that can be found in stool (bowel movement)
- *C. difficile* diarrhea occurs when antibiotics kill your “good” bacteria and allow the *C. Diff* to grow
- The risk of *C. Diff* is higher if you have been in hospital, since it is the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in hospitals
- Old age, other serious illnesses, and poor overall health may increase the risk of *C. Diff*

What Should I Do if I Get Mild Diarrhea?

- If you are taking an antibiotic and have mild diarrhea and it is not bothersome, continue to take the antibiotic as prescribed
- Keep taking the antibiotic even if you are feeling better

What are the Symptoms of C. Diff?

Symptoms of *C. Diff*, may be more severe and may include:

- Frequent, watery diarrhea that may contain mucous
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Fever 38°C or greater

When Should I Seek Medical Attention?

Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of the following:

- 3 or more episodes of loose/watery diarrhea in a 24 hour period
- Black or bright red stools
- Severe abdominal pain or cramping
- Abdominal pain that does not go away or gets worse
- Swollen or hard abdomen
- Fever 38°C or greater
- Diarrhea which continues after antibiotic is finished
- Diarrhea which starts after you have finished taking the antibiotics

How Will Your Doctor Know if you Have C. Diff?

- Remind your doctor that you have recently been on antibiotics
- If you have symptoms of *C. Diff*, your doctor will ask for a stool sample of your watery stool
- The laboratory will test the stool to see if *C. Diff* toxins are present.
- You may need to repeat the test if it is negative
- 20-30% of patients experience the same symptoms again. If you do, seek medical attention.

How Can I Take Care of Myself?

- Follow your doctor’s advice regarding rest, activity, medication and diet
- Drink plenty of clear fluids to keep yourself hydrated
- Do not take anti-diarrhea medications that you can buy without a prescription such as Imodium, Pepto-Bismol, or Kaopectate. These may cause a more serious health problem
- If your doctor prescribes a new antibiotic for your diarrhea, take all of the medicine as prescribed
- Make sure you and your family wash your hands before eating and after going to the bathroom.