

CAN CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE BE TRANSMITTED TO FAMILY AND VISITORS?

- Yes, but the best protection is good handwashing before and after visiting any client in hospital.
- Healthy individuals who are not taking antibiotics are at very low risk of getting C. diff.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AT HOME?

- Take all prescribed antibiotics until finished.
- Practice good handwashing especially after using the bathroom.
- Tell your physician you had C. diff.

IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS, AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IF THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR HANDS.

REMIND VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR HANDS.

**HAND HYGIENE
THE BEST
WAY TO PREVENT
INFECTION**



Special care must be paid to hand hygiene as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

GOOD HAND HYGIENE INCLUDES:

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

Hand Washing

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. Dispose of paper towel in the garbage.

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub is not effective against C. diff.
You *must* wash your hands with soap and water.



CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. DIFF)

**Information for Clients,
Residents, Families, and
Visitors**

WHAT IS CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. DIFF)?

Clostridium difficile (*C. diff*) is a bacteria that can sometimes be found in the intestinal tract.

- About 3-5% of individuals carry it without any symptoms. This is known as *colonization*.
- In some individuals, *C. diff* can cause diarrhea or more serious infections such as colitis.

HOW IS C. DIFF DIAGNOSED?

- If you have symptoms, your physician will ask for a stool sample to be sent to the Laboratory for testing.
- It is important to tell your physician if you have taken antibiotics in the last few months.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS?

- Watery diarrhea, sometimes with blood, mucus or pus.
- Abdominal pain, tenderness and cramping.
- Fever
- Nausea
- Loss of Appetite.

WHO IS AT RISK OF GETTING C. DIFF?

- Sometimes when an antibiotic is given for a previous infection, the *C. diff* will overgrow and produce enough toxins to cause illness.
- Individuals who have prolonged hospital stays.
- Individuals who are seriously ill.
- Individuals who are immunosuppressed.
- The elderly.
- Individuals taking Proton Pump Inhibitors (i.e., Pantoloc, Nexium, etc.)

HOW IS C. DIFF TREATED?

- **Current** antibiotics may be stopped.
- Special antibiotics will be prescribed.
- You must take these special antibiotics as prescribed until they are finished, even if the diarrhea stops.
- If the diarrhea does not stop or comes back, see your physician.
- It is not advised to take anti-diarrheal medications. The toxins must be excreted to prevent more severe damage to the bowel.

HOW IS C-DIFF SPREAD?

- *C. diff* is spread in stool. The germ survives on surfaces and objects for a long time.
- *C. diff* can be spread on the soiled hands of caregivers.
- Any surfaces, client equipment, and personal items that come in contact with stool can be a source of infection.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE IN HOSPITAL

Special Precautions will be taken while you are in hospital.

- A sign will be posted on your door.
- You **will** need to stay in your room.
- Wash your hands carefully after using the bathroom.
- You must always wash your hands if you must leave your room.
- Staff and visitors will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care.
- All staff and visitors **must** wash their hands when they enter or leave your room.
- Items brought into your room must stay in the room. Such items include: equipment (commodes, wheelchairs, walkers, etc.), chairs, and food.
- *C. diff* can live on objects in the room so it is important to clean items before they are taken out of the room. **A special cleaner will be used in your room.**

WHEN WILL SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS BE DISCONTINUED?

- Special precautions may be stopped when you have been symptom-free for at least 48-hours, (i.e. formed or normal stool for you).
- It is not necessary to send a repeat stool sample if the diarrhea has stopped and the treatment is completed.