

Can my visitors catch Clostridium Difficile?

Visitors may still come and see you, but should wear protective clothing and wash their hands on leaving the room. Healthy people are at very little risk of catching Clostridium Difficile. It is not a problem for pregnant women. If your visitors are on antibiotics, they should speak to the nurse in charge.

If you have had Clostridium Difficile whilst in hospital, will you need special care in the community?

No - your symptoms of diarrhoea should have stopped (formed stools passed) **48 hours** before your day of discharge. In addition, your GP will be informed that you have had Clostridium Difficile whilst in hospital and any future treatment should bear this in mind.

For further advice please do not hesitate to ask a nurse on your ward.

You can get further information from:

Department of Health Website, www.dh.gov.uk/hcai;
NHS Direct – Tel: 0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.co.uk;
Health Protection Agency – www.hpa.org.uk



If you need this leaflet in braille, audio, large print or another language, please contact our **Customer Service Team** on:

0300 303 9951 / 0300 303 9952

or by email at:

provide.customerservices@nhs.net

Provide

Corporate Offices
900 the Crescent
Colchester Business Park
Colchester
Essex C04 9YQ

T: 0300 303 9999
F: 0300 003 2816
E: provide.enquiries@nhs.net
www.provide.org.uk

**Provide**

Clostridium Difficile



What is Clostridium Difficile?

Clostridium Difficile is a bacterium (bug) which causes diarrhoea, sometimes with abdominal pain and vomiting. It mostly affects elderly people and those with other health problems.

The symptoms range from mild diarrhoea for a few days, which stops on its own, to frequent offensive, watery diarrhoea with mucous and sometimes blood. It is present in the gut of up to 3% of healthy adults, but rarely causes problems in healthy adults as it is kept in check by the normal gut bacteria.

How do you get it?

The bacterium (bug) produces spores (seeds) which are present in the stools of a person with Clostridium Difficile.

These spores can be spread on all surfaces, bedding and clothes and can live for a long time. They may get on to food, and into the mouth and gut of some people. If the spores get into your gut and you have recently had a course of antibiotics, your normal gut bacteria may be unable to 'fight' the Clostridium Difficile bug and you may become unwell.

How do staff find out if I have Clostridium Difficile?

If you have frequent diarrhoea with abdominal cramps which cannot be explained, your ward nurse will take a stool specimen and send it to the laboratory for rapid testing. The result will be available within 24 hrs.

If you have Clostridium Difficile, how will you be cared for whilst in hospital?

All staff are trained in preventing the spread of infection and this includes Clostridium Difficile. You will be moved immediately into a single room with your own commode or en-suite facilities. Staff caring for you will use 'barrier precautions' and wear protective clothing (apron and gloves).

They will wash their hands with soap and water when leaving your room. This is to help prevent Clostridium Difficile spores from spreading to other patients. Please ask your nurse to explain these precautions to you.

Your visitors will be asked to wear protective clothing (gloves and aprons) if they give you 'hands on care'.

- 🚩 All staff and visitors must wash their hands thoroughly on leaving your room.
- 🚩 Alcohol hand rub is not effective against Clostridium Difficile so is not recommended for use.
- 🚩 You should regularly wash your hands with soap and water (not alcohol hand rub), especially before you eat and after you have been to the toilet

Your room will be cleaned daily, including your toilet or commode with a chlorine disinfectant.



How is Clostridium Difficile treated?

Clostridium Difficile is treated with very specific oral antibiotics, which must be taken as prescribed. Occasionally the symptoms may recur, if this happens the doctor will prescribe a second oral antibiotic. When your diarrhoea has stopped and you pass a formed stool, we consider the infection has gone. No further stool testing is required.

What about my laundry?

If you have Clostridium Difficile, you are advised to only use the hospital nightwear. However, if you choose to wear your own clothes they should be taken home in a 'water soluble bag' (provided by the hospital) and washed by relatives separately at a temperature above 60 degrees.