

Can I have visitors?

There are usually no restrictions on visitors but please check with the nursing staff if you or your visitors have any concerns.

Your visitors, including children, must wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub **every** time they leave your room so they do not spread *Clostridium difficile*. This is the most important way to prevent the spread of all germs.

Staff may also instruct your visitors to wear gloves and/or gowns/aprons while visiting you.

What about when I go home?

Continuing to clean your hands, especially after going to the toilet is one of the most important ways of preventing infections spreading.

Further questions?

Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any more questions about CDI.



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POPULATION
HEALTH
SERVICES

Clostridium difficile infection

Information for patients



Department of Health
and Human Services



What is *Clostridium difficile*?

Clostridium difficile is a bacteria that lives in the gut of humans and many animal species. It is usually present in low numbers and kept under control by other bacteria living in the gut. These other, normal gut bacteria are essential for good health.

Clostridium difficile produces spores that are found in faeces. These spores can survive in the environment for a long time. Any surface, piece of equipment, furniture or furnishing can harbour the spores.



How does *Clostridium difficile* cause infection?

Clostridium difficile infection (CDI) may occur after someone has taken antibiotics to treat another illness. Antibiotics can disturb the other normal bacteria found in the gut, and this allows *Clostridium difficile* to multiply and produce a toxin that can cause diarrhoea and inflammation of the bowel.

What are the symptoms of CDI?

Symptoms of CDI may include:

- watery diarrhoea
- fever
- abdominal pain or tenderness
- loss of appetite
- nausea

Symptoms can be mild but severe cases can result in serious damage to the bowel.

Who is at risk of getting CDI?

CDI can occur in anyone who has:

- been treated with antibiotics
- had a long stay in hospital
- had gastrointestinal surgery

How does *Clostridium difficile* spread?

Clostridium difficile can be spread from the faeces of a person with CDI. This can happen by failing to wash hands properly after going to the toilet and via the hands of people who have touched a contaminated surface or item.

The risk of spreading *Clostridium difficile* to other people increases when patients with CDI, share a toilet with other patients.

Will CDI affect my hospital stay?

If you have CDI, it's important for staff to stop it spreading.

They do this by:

- caring for you in a single room until your diarrhoea settles
- cleaning their hands after touching you or your surroundings
- wearing gloves and gowns/aprons when they come into your room, and removing them when they leave your room.



It's very important for you to help stop *Clostridium difficile* spreading too.

Wash your hands with soap and running water:

- before handling food or drinks
- after going to the toilet
- after handling dirty washing
- when leaving your room.