

TO PROVIDE **THE VERY BEST CARE** FOR EACH PATIENT ON EVERY OCCASION

Clostridium difficile

An information guide



Clostridium difficile

Clostridium difficile (C.diff) is an organism (bacteria) that inhabits the bowel of a small percentage of healthy people without causing them any harm.

However, in some groups of the population, e.g. the elderly or those who have been taking antibiotics, the clostridium difficile bacteria can multiply and cause illness. When some people take antibiotics they can develop diarrhoea.

This happens because the antibiotics affect the bowel, destroying some of the normal commensals (protective bacteria) and allowing other pathogenic organisms (harmful bacteria), for example C. diff, to grow in their place.

As the C. diff bacteria multiply, they produce toxins.

These toxins damage the lining of the bowel and can cause:

- Diarrhoea (watery stool)
- Abdominal cramps and tenderness
- Fever

These symptoms may range from mild to severe illness.

How is it diagnosed?

Clostridium Difficile is diagnosed by sending a specimen of diarrhoea to the laboratory for testing.

How does it spread?

A patient can create a large number of spores whilst suffering from diarrhoea, which can contaminate equipment around their bed.

Cross infection can occur from an affected person by direct contact with another patient, via healthcare staff or through equipment which is contaminated with C. diff spores.

Clostridium Difficile is able to produce spores that are highly resistant to chemicals therefore hand washing with soap and water rather than with alcohol gel is recommended.

How can you prevent spread?

Health care staff prevent the spread of C. diff infection by ensuring that they:

- Wash their hands with liquid soap and warm water.
- Wear aprons and gloves appropriately when carrying out care and when handling bedpans and commodes.
- Clean equipment and the environment thoroughly.

If you are self-caring it is essential that your hands are washed and dried thoroughly after using the toilet.

The treatment consists of:

Stopping the antibiotic treatment (if possible) which sometimes stops the diarrhoea by itself.

Prescribing another antibiotic course to kill the bacteria in the bowel, especially if diarrhoea is severe or persistent.

When will infection control measures stop?

Once your symptoms of diarrhoea have stopped and you are having normal bowel habits for at least 48hrs.

If whilst in hospital your diarrhoea starts again all infection control measures will be restarted.

What about my visitors

Your visitors do not need to wear gloves and aprons unless they are involved in your care. It is vitally important for your visitors to wash their hands with soap and water on entering and leaving your room.

Please do not allow your visitors to sit or lie on your bed.

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Ethnic Health Team on 0161 627 8770

اگر انگلش آپکی مادری زبان نہیں ہے۔ اور آپ بات چیت کرنے میں دقت محسوس کرتے ہیں۔ تو مدد کیلئے آپ ایتھنک ہیلتھ ٹیم سے نیچے دیئے ہوئے نمبر پر رابطہ کریں۔

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ইংরেজী যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হয় অথবা ইংরেজী বলতে ও বুঝতে আপনার অস্ববিধা হয় তাহলে এথনিক হেলথ টীমের সাথে নীচের টেলিফোন নাম্বারে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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જો અંગ્રેજી આપની પહેલી ભાષા ન હોય અને આપને મદદની જરૂર હોય તો મહેરબાની કરીને એથનીક હેલ્થ ટીમનો ૦૨૭-૮૭૭૦ નંબર પર સંપર્ક કરો

Jeżeli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy proszę skontaktować się z załogą Ethnic Health pod numerem telefonu 0161 627 8770

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 620 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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