



Clostridium Difficile

What is Clostridium Difficile ("C Diff") ?

Clostridium difficile is a bacterium that produces a toxin that can cause inflammation of the intestinal tract.

What are the symptoms of Clostridium Difficile?

The usual symptoms are diarrhea, fever, and abdominal pain. In some cases, there may not be diarrhea. You may or may not have blood in your stools.

How did I get it?

Clostridium difficile can be part of the normal bacteria that live in the large intestine. Taking certain antibiotics can change the normal balance of bacteria in your large intestine making it easier for Clostridium difficile to grow and cause an infection.

What can I do about it?

If a C. difficile infection is suspected, you will be asked to give a stool (feces) sample that will be tested for the bacteria and its toxins. Most importantly, you and your visitors should pay special attention to good hand washing and follow the instructions given to you by health care staff

Why are precautions needed?

Precautions are needed because surfaces, like toilets and common areas that hands touch can become contaminated with the bacteria. The bacteria can live on surfaces for a long time if they are not properly cleaned. In order to prevent spread to other patients in the hospital, it will be necessary for everyone to follow these precautions.

What are these precautions?

If you have symptoms (diarrhea) you will be placed in a private room.

You will need to take special care with hand washing. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer after using the toilet or bedpan, before eating, and every time you leave the room.

It is also important that all staff and visitors **WASH THEIR HANDS** or use hand sanitizer when they come in or when they leave your room. Do not be shy about reminding everyone to clean their hands.

A "stop sign" will be placed at the door to your room to remind everyone about precautions. Staff will wear gowns and gloves when they come in to care for you or handle items in your room.

Items in your room will either stay with you or be cleaned when they are removed from your room.

Can I give Clostridium difficile to my family and friends?

Their best protection against even a small risk is to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after visiting you and follow the precautions as outlined above

For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control at

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_CdiffFAQ_general.html