

C-Diff

Clostridium Difficile (Kloss-STRID-ee-um DIFF-a-seal)

At CGH Medical Center, we are working hard to decrease the chance of infections for patients, visitors and employees. You may have heard on the TV news about some of the serious infections passed from one person to another, or even from touching surfaces contaminated with some of the powerful germs in our environment today. It is hard to destroy some of these germs even when the strongest medicines are used. So it is very important for all of us to work together to prevent these germs from spreading.

One of these powerful germs is Clostridium difficile or sometimes we call it "C-diff". Symptoms of this spore forming organism include: watery diarrhea, fever, loss of appetite, nausea and belly pain/tenderness.

C-diff often occurs in patients who are on antibiotics. Because a more serious and possibly life-threatening infection can occur, we ask that everyone follow some simple rules to prevent spread.

What can you do?

HANDWASHING with SOAP and WATER

(Alcohol hand sanitizers can't kill C-diff)

When?

- Before touching your mouth or nose
- After contact with the infected person
- After contact with any surfaces in the room
- After taking off isolation gowns/gloves
- After using the bathroom

Anything else?

Please follow instructions for isolation and handwashing... each and every time. If you have questions about what you need to do, please ask the nurse or nursing assistant.

- Do not take hospital basins or pitchers home, or any bottles of soap or lotion. These things could be contaminated. We ask that you do not take them home.
- Seek medical attention if you have been in contact with someone with C-diff and develop:
 - diarrhea lasting more than 3 days
 - blood in your stool
 - a fever

For more information, ask your nurse or physician. We are glad to help you learn how to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

Want to know more about C-diff?

Find C. difficile Fact Sheets from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at:

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_Cdiff.html

C-Diff Q & A

from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Q: What is Clostridium difficile (C. difficile)?

A: C. difficile is a bacterium that is found in the intestines. It most commonly causes mild to moderate diarrhea. Sometimes it can cause more serious infection of the intestines, called colitis. In rare cases, infection with C. difficile can lead to death.

Q: How does C. difficile cause disease?

A: C. difficile bacteria can be found in the intestines of healthy people. It is usually kept in check by other normal bacteria. When a person takes an antibiotic, some of the normal bacteria die and C. difficile bacteria can multiply. When C. difficile bacteria multiply, some are capable of producing toxins that cause diarrhea or inflammation of the colon.

Q: What are the symptoms of C. difficile disease?

A: The most common symptom of C. difficile disease is watery diarrhea, consisting of 3 or more bowel movements per day for 2 or more days. Other common symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal cramping or tenderness.

Q: Who is at risk for developing C. difficile disease?

A: Antibiotic use is the most important risk factor for developing C. difficile disease. Other important risk factors include hospitalization, a stay in a nursing home, advanced age, a serious underlying illness, a weakened immune system, or gastrointestinal surgery.

Q: How is C. difficile disease treated?

A: If you develop C. difficile disease as a result of antibiotic use, your doctor may instruct you to stop taking that antibiotic if possible. In addition, your doctor may prescribe oral metronidazole or oral vancomycin capsules to treat your C. difficile disease. In very severe cases, intravenous medications or surgery may be required.

Q: How is C. difficile spread?

A: C. difficile is found in feces and has the ability to form spores. People can become infected when they touch items that are contaminated with feces and then touch their mouth. In the hospital, C. difficile can be spread between patients on the hands of healthcare workers. It is important to note that C. difficile bacteria produce spores that can live on surfaces for months. In the hospital, spores can be transferred to anyone who comes into contact with contaminated items (such as bedrails and commodes) or medical devices (such as blood pressure cuffs and thermometers). If the spores are ingested, C. difficile disease may occur.

Q: How can I prevent spreading C. difficile to my family members and friends?

A: It is rare for healthy people who are not taking antibiotics to get C. difficile disease. However, you can still spread the bacteria to others - particularly if you have diarrhea.

Especially after using the bathroom and before eating, wash your hands with soap and water.

It may help to prevent the spread of C. difficile if you clean your kitchen and bathrooms daily with a mixture of bleach and water. The mixture should include 1 part bleach to every 10 parts water; so, for example, if you are using a cup, mix 1 cup of bleach with 10 cups of water. This mixture can be used to clean the surfaces in your kitchen (for example, countertops and cutting boards) and bathrooms (for example, toilet seats, toilet bowl, flush handle and sink

faucet handles). Mix only the amount of bleach and water that you will need to clean your kitchen and bathrooms once, and pour the rest down the drain.

If you have diarrhea, try to avoid using the same toilet that your family members use, unless the toilet can be cleaned with the bleach and water mixture after each use.

Q: What symptoms should I be concerned about during or after treatment for C. difficile disease?

A: You should seek medical advice immediately if you develop a fever, chills, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, or any other concerning symptoms.