

## HOW CAN YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF?

- Follow your doctor's advice regarding rest, activity, medication and diet.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after using the washroom.
- If your doctor prescribes a new antibiotic for your diarrhea, take all of the medicine as prescribed.
- Be sure that you drink plenty of fluids to keep hydrated.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT INFECTION CONTROL, PLEASE ASK YOUR NURSE TO CONTACT THE INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL OFFICE.

Lake of the Woods  
District Hospital

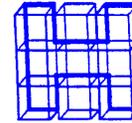
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## Clostridium-Difficile Infection (C-Diff)

Fact Sheet for Patients, Family and Visitors

### PATIENT AND FAMILY INFORMATION



### CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C-diff)

## WHAT IS C- DIFF?

*Clostridium difficile* (C-diff) is one of the many bacteria sometimes found in the intestines.

Others can become infected if they touch a surface (toilet, bedpan, bed railing etc.) covered with C-diff and then touch their mouths.

Health Care Providers can also spread this germ if they don't clean their hands prior to caring for their patients. When C-diff grows, it produces substances (toxins). These toxins can damage the bowel and may cause diarrhea. C-diff disease is usually mild but sometimes can be severe.

In severe cases, surgery may be needed and in extreme cases C-diff may cause death. C-diff is the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in hospital.

The main symptoms of C-diff are:

- Watery diarrhea
- Fever
- Abdominal pain or tenderness
- Loss of appetite
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**GOOD HAND WASHING IS THE BEST WAY  
TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THIS  
AND OTHER BACTERIA.**

# Clostridium-Difficile Infection (C-Diff)

## Fact Sheet for Patients, Family and Visitors

### WHO GETS C- DIFF?

C-diff infection usually occurs during or after the use of antibiotics. Old age, presence of other serious illnesses and poor overall health may increase the risk of severe disease.

### HOW WILL YOUR DOCTOR KNOW THAT YOU HAVE C- DIFF?

If you have symptoms of C-diff, your doctor will ask for a sample of your watery stool. The laboratory will test the stool to see if C diff toxins are present.

### HOW IS C- DIFF TREATED?

Treatment depends on how sick you are with the disease. People with mild symptoms may not need treatment. For more severe disease, an antibiotic is given.

### HOW DOES C- DIFF SPREAD?

When a person has C-diff disease the germs in the stool can soil surfaces such as toilets, handles, bedpans, or commode chairs. When touching these items our hands can become soiled. If we then touch our mouth we can swallow the germ. Our soiled hands also can spread the germ to other surfaces.

### HOW TO PREVENT SPREAD IN THE HOSPITAL?

If you have C-diff diarrhea you will be moved to a private room until you are free from diarrhea for at least 2 days. Your activities outside the room will be restricted. Everyone who enters your room wears gown and gloves. Everyone MUST clean their hands when leaving your room.

Always wash your hands after using the bathroom. Cleaning hands is the most important way for everyone to prevent the spread of this germ. As well, a thorough cleaning of your room and equipment will be done to remove any germs. Our goal is to always identify patients with C-diff infections quickly and institute infection control measures.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO AT HOME?

Healthy people like your family and friends who are not taking antibiotics are at very low risk of getting C-diff disease.

#### Hand Care

Wash your hands for 15 seconds:

- After using the toilet
- After touching dirty surfaces
- Before eating
- Before preparing meals

#### Cleaning the House

This germ can be destroyed by most household cleaner diluted according to the instructions or diluted household bleach:

- Wet the surface well and clean using good friction
- Allow the surface to dry
- Pay special attention to areas that may be soiled with stool such as the toilet and sink. If you see stool, remove first and then clean as described above.

#### Cleaning Clothes/Other Fabric

Wash clothes/fabric separately if they are heavily soiled with stool:

- Rinse stool off
- Clean in a hot water cycle with soap
- Dry items in the dryer if possible

It is very important that you take all your medication as prescribed by your doctor. You should not use any drugs from the drugstore that will stop your diarrhea (e.g., Imodium). **If diarrhea persists or comes back, contact your doctor.**