

What should I do at home?

If you have CDI when you leave the hospital, the chance of spreading it to your healthy family or friends is low as long as you practice good hygiene. Healthy people who have not taken drugs to fight infection are at very low risk of getting sick from C. diff. Wash your hands when they are dirty, before and after eating or drinking, and after using the toilet or blowing your nose. Make sure your family and friends clean their hands too.

How long will I have CDI?

Hospital staff will ask you daily about your bowel movements to see if you still have diarrhea.

Once your bowel movements have returned to what is normal for you for at least 3 days we may stop using extra precautions. We do not test to see if you are cured because the C. diff toxin can be detected in stool for weeks after you have recovered.

Once you have had CDI it is possible that you could get sick with it again.

COMPASSION is our
PASSION

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C-Diff (Clostridium Difficile)

Patient Information Pamphlet



 **WINDSOR
REGIONAL
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OUTSTANDING CARE – NO EXCEPTIONS!

What is *C. difficile*?

Clostridium difficile (*C. diff*) is a germ that lives all over in our environment. It can be found in soil and water. About 5% of healthy people carry *C. diff* in their gut. In the hospital, about 30% of people can carry it without any signs of illness. If you are not sick with *C. diff* then it should not be treated.

What is *C. difficile* Infection (CDI)?

When germs that are normally found in your gut are killed, *C. diff* can start to cause an infection. This can happen when you take drugs to fight infections. *C. diff* will begin to overgrow and produce a toxin. The toxin causes diarrhea and can damage your gut.

Signs of *C. diff* infection (or CDI) are watery diarrhea, pain, cramping, loss of appetite and nausea. Most cases of CDI are mild but it can be a very serious infection. Serious complications include having to stay in hospital, surgery, and in extreme cases - death.

A stool sample is used to test for the *C. diff* toxin.

How is *C. diff* spread?

When a person is sick with CDI, *C. diff* can soil surfaces such as toilets, handles, bedpans, or commode chairs. *C. diff* is spread from one person to another by touching.

This could be from touching a person who is sick with *C. diff* or soiled items in their room. Hands are the most common way *C. diff* gets around.

Who is at Risk of having CDI?

- If you have ever had any of the following you are at risk of having CDI:
- Recently been on drugs to fight infection
- Spent a long time in hospital
- Recently had bowel (gut) surgery
- Over the age of 65
- Your body's defenses are weak due to medicine or illness like cancer or kidney disease.

What happens when I am in the hospital?

All staff working in the hospital are trained in ways to stop the spread of germs and this includes *C. diff*. The most important way to stop the spread of germs is by keeping our hands clean. Soap and water or alcohol rub may be used to clean hands. You will be able to find sinks and alcohol rub all over the hospital.

This is what to expect if you have CDI:

- You will be given drugs to treat the CDI.
- You will be placed in a room by yourself.
- Your room will be cleaned twice a day with a special cleaner.
- Staff will use extra items when they care for you. A gown will be worn when they enter your room or bed space. This stops staff from picking up *C. diff* on their clothing. Gloves will be used at times to stop the spread of germs on their hands.
- A sign will be placed on your door to remind others to wear a gown and gloves.
- Everyone who leaves your room must clean their hands well.
- You must clean your hands before you leave your room and may be asked to put on a clean hospital gown.

- You do not ever need to wear gloves. This makes it hard to clean your hands at the right times.
- Your family and friends will need to wear a gown. They only need to wear gloves if they are going to care for you, like taking you to the toilet or giving you medicine.

Here are some tips that you can use to limit the risk to others:

- Do not touch open wounds on your body. If you must change a bandage make sure you wash your hands before and after.
- Do not share towels or care items like toothbrushes, washcloths, or razors.
- Anyone who cares for you should wash their hands when they are done.
- Your clothes can be washed in the same manner as everyone else in the household.
- If you still have diarrhea when you go home you may consider cleaning your bathrooms with a bleach based product such as Clorox. A 10 percent solution works best. No other special cleaning of items in your home is needed, like tables, counters, or dishes.
- The fact that you have had CDI is private. It is your choice to share this information with your friends and family.
- Always tell your doctor or nurse that you have diarrhea or if you have recently taken drugs to fight infection.
- DO NOT** take anti-diarrhea medicine that you can buy without a prescription. These may cause a more serious health concern.