



Corporate

Infection Control

Clostridium difficile

What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile is one of many different bacteria that can live in our gut, rarely causing us problems. It is found in about 3% of healthy people.

How do you catch it?

Infection with Clostridium difficile is most often linked to people taking antibiotics. Some antibiotics change the natural balance of bacteria in the gut. This allows Clostridium difficile to grow in number and produce toxins. This can cause diarrhoea.

How is diagnosis made?

Diagnosis is normally made by sending a sample of diarrhoea to the laboratory.

How will I be looked after in hospital?

If you have diarrhoea you will be cared for in a single room. This will minimise the risk of spread to other patients, although spread can occur on people's hands. Staff caring for you will wash their hands and wear gloves and aprons to protect you and other patients. There will be a notice advising staff and visitors of the correct precautions to take when entering a side room and caring for you.

Can my visitors catch Clostridium difficile?

Healthy people very rarely catch Clostridium difficile. The greatest risk is to those who are frail or unwell (like other hospital patients) or those who are on antibiotics.

If frail visitors are planning to visit the ward please ask the nurses for advice. It is not normally necessary for visitors to wear gloves and aprons. However if visitors are having close contact with patients who are isolated (e.g. helping with washing and dressing) we recommend that they are worn whilst the patient is in a single room.

It is important that visitors wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water when they arrive and before leaving the ward. Please ask the nurses if you are unsure.

How will I be treated?

It is important that the staff looking after you know when you have diarrhoea so that they can give you the right treatment.

If your diarrhoea is not getting better, your doctor may change your antibiotics or stop them. They may also prescribe another antibiotic to treat the infection.

If your symptoms do not stop, it is important you tell the staff looking after you.

What can I do to speed up my recovery?

It is important that you wash your hands with soap and water before you eat or drink and after you have been to the toilet. Make sure that any food you have is covered or kept inside your locker (unless it needs to be in a fridge).

What happens when I stop having diarrhoea?

Once your diarrhoea has stopped, it means the infection is settling. If your bowels have returned to normal it may be possible to move you out of a single room. The staff looking after you will let you know when this is possible.

Will it delay my discharge from hospital?

If you are well enough to leave hospital you may be discharged home. The doctors may want to make sure that your diarrhoea is settling and that you are able to eat and drink normally.

It is important that you talk to the nurses or doctor if you are worried. If you are waiting to be transferred to another hospital the transfer may be delayed until your symptoms have settled.

What happens if I have diarrhoea again?

Sometimes the diarrhoea can start again. This may be after you have gone home, or while you are still in hospital.

It is difficult to know exactly what the cause of the diarrhoea is. If the symptoms reoccur within the same month it is likely to be the same infection, however it is important to follow this up as it may be another reason.

It is important to tell a doctor or nurse if your diarrhoea starts up again.

You may be asked to provide a sample by either your GP. (if you are at home), or the nurses, if you are still in hospital. For further information about going home please ask the ward staff for the leaflet 'C. difficile –now you are going home'.

If you have any questions or concerns about your condition, please talk to one of the nursing or medical staff.

Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the PALS and complaints team on freephone 0800 328 7971.

Notes

If you need the information in another language or format please ask us

Nëse ky informacion ju nevojitet në një gjuhë apo format tjetër, ju lutem na kontaktoni

আপনি যদি এই তথ্যাদি অন্য কোন ভাষায় বা মাধ্যমে (ফরম্যাট) পেতে চান
তবে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી ભાષામાં અથવા બીજા આકારમાં જોઈએ, તો કૃપા કરીને અમને પૂછો
यदि आपको यह जानकारी किसी दूसरी भाषा या आकार में चाहिए हो तो कृपया हम से पूछें

若您需要本信息的另一种语言或格式的文本，请与我们联系

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛੋ

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دوسری زبان میں یا کسی دوسرے طریقہ سے درکار ہیں تو براہ مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیں:۔

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