



For Staff /Patient Education

Clostridium Difficile

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What is it?

- ***Clostridium difficile*** [klo-strid-ee-um dif-uh-seel] or ***C. difficile*** is a gram positive, spore forming anaerobic bacillus bacterium that produces two exotoxins; toxin A and toxin B. It is a common cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD). It accounts for 15-25% of all episodes of AAD.
- While it can be a minor part of normal colonic flora, the bacterium is thought to cause disease when competing bacteria in the gut have been reduced by antibiotic treatment.
- People who have other illnesses or conditions requiring prolonged use of antibiotics, and the elderly, are at greater risk of acquiring this disease.
- *C. difficile* infections are the most common cause of pseudomembranous colitis, and in rare cases this can progress to toxic megacolon, which can be life-threatening.
- This organism forms heat-resistant spores that are not killed by alcohol-based hand cleansers or routine surface cleaning. Thus, these spores survive in clinical environments for long periods. Because of this, the bacteria can be cultured from almost any surface. Once spores are ingested, their acid-resistance allows them to pass through the stomach unscathed. They germinate and multiply into vegetative cells in the colon upon exposure to bile acids.
- Colonizes up to 3-5% of adult humans without causing symptoms.
- Clinical symptoms include: watery diarrhea; fever ; loss of appetite; nausea; abdominal pain/ tenderness.

How is it spread?

- *Clostridium difficile* spores are transferred to patients mainly via the hands of healthcare personnel who have touched a contaminated surface or item.
- person to person by the [fecal-oral route](#)
- *Eating with hands that are contaminated with C.difficile.*

Where is it found?

- In the gastrointestinal tract or stool of infected persons.
- *C. diff* spores can live outside the human body for a very long time and may be found on surfaces, device, or things in the environment such as bed linens, bed rails, electronic rectal thermometers, bathroom fixtures, and medical equipments that serve as their reservoir.

Prevention & Control:

- Contact Precautions to prevent *C. diff* from spreading to other patients
- Private room with dedicated toileting facilities or share a room only with someone else who also has *C. diff*.
- Use gloves and gown when entering patients room or whenever a direct care to infected patient is provided (must be discarded before leaving the room)
- Clean hands well and often with soap and water.
- Dedicate patient/resident equipment or clean and disinfect equipment after each patient/resident use.
- Ensure twice daily and as necessary cleaning and disinfection of all touched surfaces in the room .
- Tell the receiving department and staff involved in transport the infection control precautions in use.
- Ensure appropriate terminal cleaning of the room after discharge.
- Establish a process for management of antibiotic use, including regular review of antibiotic utilization.
- Discontinue precautions only at the direction of the infection control team



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Source:(http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/organisms/cdiff/Cdiff_faqs_HCP.html)



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