

Clostridium difficile (C.diff)

Information for patients, staff
and relatives



What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile (C.diff) is a bacterium (germ) that can live in the gut of both children and adults and under normal circumstances, cause no problems.

Sometimes when antibiotic therapy is given it can grow rapidly in the intestine (bowel). This can develop after even only one dose of antibiotics.

The germ produces toxins which are released and can cause.

- mild diarrhoea
- serious diarrhoea with mucous and blood
- abdominal pain

C.Diff can affect anyone but those more at risk are the elderly and those with other health conditions.

Most cases symptoms occur during the first week of antibiotic therapy but onset can as late as six weeks after starting antibiotics.

How do I find out if I have Clostridium difficile?

If you have diarrhoea your clinical team can arrange for a stool (poo) sample to be sent to laboratory for testing. The result should be back within 24 hours.

Can Clostridium difficile be treated?

You will be prescribed 10 days of antibiotics to treat the infection. Diarrhoea usually begins to get better after 2-3 days of starting this antibiotic.

It is important to monitor whether your diarrhoea is improving or getting worse. If your diarrhoea does not start to get better, another type of antibiotic may be necessary. If left untreated your symptoms may get worse and cause complications in your bowel.

It is also important to try to prevent any complications of diarrhoea. Such as:

- dehydration - make sure

that you drink plenty of water

- sore skin on your bottom - keep clean and change your clothing daily or as soon as it is soiled. Using wet wipes on your bottom after you have had diarrhoea can help prevent sore skin.

Please tell your doctor or nurse if you notice that your skin is becoming sore or you are unable to drink enough water.

Can it spread?

It is very easily spread from one person to another either from person to person or from touching contaminated object.

You and those caring for you must wash your/their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (alcohol gel does not kill the germ).

If you need to remain in hospital you will be look after in a single room with access to a toilet or commode. Hospital staff will wear PPE (personal protective equipment) while

looking after you to ensure it does not spread to other patients.

Can I go home with C.diff?

If your symptoms are manageable you can be discharged home with antibiotics.

It is important that everyone maintains good hygiene measures within the household (i.e. not to share towels/cutlery and if possible use separate toilets) and to wash your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before handling or eating food.

Can I have visitors?

We ask that visitors who are unwell themselves must not visit until they are better.

Visitors do not need to wear gloves and aprons but they must wash their hands before and after visiting anyone in hospital. This protects patients and prevents the spread of infections to others. If your

visitors are going to see another patient on the same day, they should come to see you afterwards.

Please adhere to local infection prevention and control guidance. The Trust reserves the right to refuse or end a visit if safety cannot be maintained.

Will I need retesting?

We consider the infection to be gone once your normal bowel habit has returned for more than 2 days.

There is no need for another sample to be tested but it is essential to complete the course of antibiotics you have been prescribed.

It is important that Doctors are aware that you have had C.diff in the past if you were to become ill again. A note will be added to your hospital notes and your GP will be informed.

Will it come back?

There is a possibility that the infection may return within

the first 3 weeks following treatment. If your symptoms do return you should consult your Doctor for advice.

It is important that if you receive a repeat prescription of antibiotics from your GP (rescue pack for respiratory or urine infections) that this is not re-prescribed without a review by your doctor in case it causes your C.diff to come back.

Who can I speak to if I have further questions?

Please speak to any of the ward staff who are caring for you.

If your doctors and nurses are unable to answer your questions or if you require further information, the infection prevention and control nurses are available via switchboard at the Countess of Chester Hospital on 01244 365000.

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on compact disk and in other languages on request. Please contact the Patient Experience Team (PALS) on:

Telephone: 01244 366066
or email: coch.patientexperience@nhs.net

إذا ترغب في الحصول على النسخة باللغة العربية ، فضلاً اتصل بمركز معلومات المرضى أو تحدث مع أحد الموظفين

若是你想索取這份傳單的中文譯本，請聯絡「病人預約中心」或向其中一名職員查詢。

Si vous voulez cette brochure en français, contactez le bureau des rendez-vous ou demandez à un membre du personnel.

यदि आप यह परचा हिन्दी में लेना चाहते हैं तो कृपया पेशेन्ट अॅपाइन्टमेन्ट सेन्टर से संपर्क करें या किसी स्टाफ से पूछें।

Haddii aad jeclaan laheyd buug-yarah-an oo af-Soomaali ku qoran la soo xiriir xarruunta bukaan ballaminta ama wax weydii xubin shaqaalaha ka tirsan.

Si desea recibir este folleto en español, sírvase contactar al Centro de Citas para Pacientes o solicitarlo al personal.

اگر آپ کو یہ کتابچہ اردو میں درکار ہے تو پيشنٹ اپوائنٹمنٹ سينٹر يا عملے کے کسی رکن سے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Mae'r daflen hon ar gael (ar gais), mewn print bras, ar dâp sain neu ar ddisg, ac efallai mewn ieithoedd eraill ar gais. Cysylltwch â chanolfan apwyntiadau cleifion i ofyn am gopi.

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