

Clostridioides difficile Infection (C. difficile)

Information Sheet for Patients & Visitors



C. difficile Explained:

Clostridioides difficile (also known as C. difficile) is one of the many bacteria found in the intestines and is a common cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhea. Although antibiotics can be lifesaving medications, they also destroy the good bacteria (microflora) in a person's intestines. When this happens, C. difficile can grow to unusually high levels in the intestines and make dangerous toxins, damaging the intestines and causing diarrhea. Symptoms of a C. difficile infection include diarrhea (mild or severe), fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain, and tenderness. If you have symptoms of a C. difficile infection, your doctor will request that a sample of your diarrhea be tested to see if the toxins are present and may prescribe specific antibiotics for treatment.

How C. difficile Is Spread:

C. difficile can be spread to others through direct contact, if hands are unwashed, or indirectly by contact with dirty equipment, particularly equipment in contact with feces, such as bedpans. C. difficile produces spores, which can contaminate a room and are difficult to kill, requiring that the room and bathroom is cleaned with bleach.

Special Precautions for C. difficile:

Precautions are taken to stop C. difficile from spreading to other patients in the hospital including:

- Special accommodations may be required for infection control purposes.
- A long-sleeved gown and gloves may be worn by everyone who cares for you.
- A door sign may be placed to your room to remind others about the special precautions.
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly using bleach to help kill the spores.
- Everyone must clean their hands before entering and leaving your room.

Family & Visitors Protocols While at St. Mary's:

Your family and visitors will be required to clean their hands with hand sanitizer and wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves while in your room. Before leaving your room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in the garbage container and/or the laundry hamper located in your room and clean their hand with hand sanitizer. These precautions will help prevent further transmission.

After You Leave St. Mary's:

- Everyone who might help you with your personal care should practice good hand hygiene.
- Everyone should wash hands before making any food and before eating.
- Everyone should wash hands well after using the toilet.
- Clothing may be laundered in the usual manner along with the rest of the household laundry.
- No special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g., dishes) in the home is required.
- Clean the bathroom or anything contaminated with feces using a fresh 1:10 dilution of household bleach.

Good Hand Hygiene Practices:

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose
- Before eating and drinking
- Before you leave your room
- Before and after you touch your dressing or wounds
- When your hands are visibly dirty



Reference:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/a/2013/aros-screening-testing-surveillance.pdf>

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Annex A – Screening, testing and surveillance for antibiotic-resistant organisms (AROs). Annexed to: Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013