For further advice either speak to the nurse looking after you or contact
Infection Prevention and Control Team
on
01502 445361

What is Clostridium Difficile?

Patient information leaflet

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What is Clostridium Difficile?

Clostridium difficile (commonly known as C.diff) is a bacteria found in the intestine along with other bacteria. Sometimes, as a result of taking antibiotics, some bacteria are destroyed but C.diff survives and multiplies to produce toxins which may cause diarrhoea

How will I know if I have C.diff?

The main symptom of C.diff is diarrhoea, which can range from mild to severe. Abdominal pain, fever, loss of appetite and sickness may also be present. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks.

How is it diagnosed?

A faecal (poo) sample is sent to the laboratory to confirm whether or not you have C.diff infection.

Can it be treated?

Where possible, any antibiotics you are taking will be stopped. You may be given an alternative antibiotic to treat the C.diff infection.

It is very important that you do not become dehydrated, so remember to drink plenty of water.

You should also stop taking any laxatives that you may have.

How does C.diff spread?

The main risk is person to person contact, e.g. hand to hand contact and via hand to mouth contact, although the bacteria can survive in the environment for long periods of time.

How can the spread be prevented?

Good hand washing is the single most important infection prevention and control measure.
Remember to wash your hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly on a clean towel * Before and after using the toilet. * Before handling food, * After handling soiled bedding or clothing.

Do NOT share towels, facecloths etc. with the affected person.

Clothing, bed linen, towels etc. should be washed at 60ºc or above if possible or at 40ºc using washing powder that contains bleach in order to destroy the C.diff bacteria.

Cleaning around the home should be carried out with detergent and bleach based product.

Particular attention should be given to:
- Washbasins
- Baths
- Toilet seat and handles
- Showers
- Any surface which comes into contact with the hands e.g. door handles, telephones, keyboards.

It is important to use a clean cloth each time to prevent surfaces being re-infected.
- Use disposable cleaning cloths
- Or wash the cloth at 60ºc or above

What should I do if my diarrhoea starts again?

If your diarrhoea starts again once you have completed any course of antibiotics, you should contact your GP or the Infection Control Team 01502 445361

WASHING YOUR HANDS USING LIQUID SOAP & WATER IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. HAND SANITISER IS NOT EFFECTIVE AGAINST C.DIFF BACTERIA.