

What is C-Diff (Clostridium Difficile)?

The bowels normally have moderate amounts of bacteria (flora) in their lining. C-Diff is one of the bacteria normally found in moderate amounts in the bowels. We know that antibiotics are used to treat a variety of infections in the body. Unfortunately, sometimes an antibiotic that is being used to treat another bacteria in the body also kills the normal flora in the bowel. This causes the C-Diff bacteria to multiply. This is called "Antibiotic-associated diarrhea." Diarrhea symptoms may occur right away or weeks after the treating antibiotic is stopped. This type of C-Diff diarrhea can also occur after taking some cancer drugs. . Some people with this germ in their bowel have no symptoms while others may have severe diarrhea.

How is C-Diff spread?

C-Diff can be spread in the environment from the hand to mouth route.

What tests are involved?

A culture of the diarrhea stool is sent to the laboratory to be analyzed.. Blood tests may be ordered to test the blood for infection.

How is C-Diff treated?

- The first line of treatment is to stop the antibiotic believed to be causing the diarrhea.
- Often symptoms go away when the antibiotic is stopped.
- Patients usually respond to a second course of therapy.
- Medications to ease the discomfort of C-Diff are available.
- Talk to your doctor about what treatment is best for you.
- Some foods that can help decrease symptoms are:
 - Yogurt products 1-2 daily
 - Yogurt drinks and yogurt smoothies.

How can you stop the spread of C-Diff?

Proper Hand Washing Technique:

- 1.) Use continuously running water
- 2.) Use an adequate amount of soap
- 3.) Scrub all areas of hands
- 4.) Clean under and around fingernails
- 5.) Keep your hands down while washing
- 6.) Rinse well with warm running water.
- 7.) Dry well with a paper towel

8.) Use a clean paper towel to turn off the water

How can C-Diff be treated at home?

Gloves--Wear disposable medical gloves (purchased in a drug store) if you must touch body substances.

--Always wash hands after removing gloves.

Laundry--No special washing instructions are needed unless items are heavily soiled with body substances.

--If heavily soiled, wash items separately in detergent and bleach**(see below).

--People with diarrhea should not share washcloths or towels without washing them in between uses.

Food Preparation and Dishes

- People with C-Diff do NOT need separate dishes or eating utensils and these items do not need special cleaning. They should be washed as usual with hot soapy water or placed in the dishwasher with other dishes.
- Anyone preparing food should wash his or her hands before beginning food preparation and should never lick fingers or taste food from the cooking spoon.

Tips:

**A Handy Disinfectant Solution:

One fourth (1/4) to one half (1/2) cup of household chlorine bleach in one gallon of water makes an effective, yet inexpensive germ-killing solution. This solution can be used on floors, toilets, sinks and other items such as sponges and mops. Throw away the bleach solution after use.

Additional Resources:

National Center for Infectious Diseases

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/netinfo.htm>

1-800-311-3435

Office of Health Communication

National Center for Infectious Diseases

Center for Disease and Prevention

Makestop C-14

1600 Clifton Road

Atlanta, GA 30333

Finding A Physician

As Caregivers, our physicians serve with a deep respect for the dignity of all persons.

Our practice of quality care, our dedication to the poor and our commitment to education make our physicians valuable assets to our community.

At St. Vincent Charity Hospital, we have physicians who specialize in the treatment of infection control. Please call the Physician Referral Line at 1-800-223-8662 or visit our Web site at www.stvincentcharity.com to contact one of our esteemed physicians.

St. Vincent Charity Hospital

2351 E. 22nd Street

Cleveland, OH 44115

Saint Luke's Medical Center

11311 Shaker Boulevard

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

1-216-861-6200

1-216-368-7125

1. Dry well with paper towels
2. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the water

Home Care Instructions

Gloves: Wear disposable medical gloves if you must touch body substances. Always wash your hand after removing gloves. Purchase medical gloves at your local drug store (not yellow gloves).

Laundry: No special washing instructions are needed unless items are heavily soiled with body substances. If heavily soiled, wash items separately in detergent and bleach. People with diarrhea should not share washcloths and towels without washing them between uses.

Food preparation and dishes: People with *Clostridium difficile* DO NOT need separate dishes or eating utensils, and these items do not need special cleaning. They should be washed as usual with hot, soapy water or placed in the dishwasher with other dishes. Anyone preparing food should wash his/her hands before beginning preparation and should never lick fingers or taste food from the cooking spoon.

A Handy Disinfectant Solution: One-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of household chlorine bleach in one gallon of water makes an effective, yet inexpensive germ-killing solution. This solution can be used on floors, toilets, sinks and other items such as sponges and mops. Throw away the bleach solution after use.

Nutrition:

Some foods that can help decrease your symptoms:

- Yogurt products 1-2 times a day
- Kefir is a yogurt drink
- Yogurt smoothies
- Yogurt capsules (OTC-L-ACIDOPHOLUS) puts good bacteria back into the gut.

Talk to your doctor about the nutritional treatments for *clostridium difficile*.