

***C. difficile* Colitis/Diarrhea**

Patient/Caregiver Information

C. difficile is a bacteria that causes watery or bloody diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting (throwing up), abdominal (belly) pain, and loss of appetite. ***C. difficile*** is common in patients who have recently been on antibiotics for other reasons. It is also common in patients who have received certain chemotherapy.

C. difficile is treated with antibiotics that are taken by mouth. However, some patients are so sick that they need intravenous (IV) antibiotics. They may also need more than one antibiotic at a time.

Some people get ***C. difficile*** more than once a year and may need special treatments. Call your doctor if you have diarrhea frequently. Once you are taking medicine for ***C. difficile***, you should start feeling better in a few days. Your diarrhea should be gone in two weeks. If your diarrhea continues or worsens, call your regular doctor.

If you have ***C. difficile*** in the hospital, you will be on special precautions, called “Enteric Precautions.” This means that health care providers who touch you will wear gowns and gloves. They will wash their hands with soap and water frequently. The alcohol-based hand wash in your hospital room does not kill ***C. difficile***.

Because ***C. difficile*** can be spread to others, please stay in your hospital room until your doctor or nurse tells you that it is safe to visit other parts of the unit.

C. difficile is killed by bleach. After each bowel movement, clean your home bathroom with bleach. Wipe down any part of the bathroom you touch, including the sink and toilet. Continue this cleaning pattern for 2 weeks.

Remember to carefully wash your hands with soap and water often. Because ***C. difficile*** can survive on cloth towels, use paper towels to dry your hands and clean your bathroom. This helps to prevent spread of ***C. difficile*** to family, friends, and health care providers.

Your doctor may stop or change some of your regular medicines after you have ***C. difficile***.

If you have ***C. difficile*** and notice a lot of abdominal pain, vomiting, fevers, or dizziness, call your doctor or seek health care immediately. These signs may mean you have an emergency.



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