

We understand that some of these precautions can feel uncomfortable.

Because some of our patients are very ill, we have to be very careful.

We appreciate your help and patience.

Did you know...

- Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to help minimize your risk of infection.
- All visitors should wash their hands before they visit a patient, and when they leave. Waterless hand wash is located on the walls in all areas of the Hospital.
- You will notice that health care providers wash their hands frequently. This very important aspect of health care helps to prevent the spread of infection.



Wash your hands often and well.

For more information contact Infection Control

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Department of Infection Control

Special Isolation Precautions for *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*)

Information for patients and visitors



One of your tests shows that you have a germ called *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*). Staff must now make some changes in your care. They will use special precautions to prevent the passing of germs to other patients.

What is *Clostridium difficile*?

- *C. difficile* is a bacterium (a type of germ) that is resistant to the usual antibiotics we use to treat other infections.
- Some *C. difficile* bacteria can produce a toxin (a type of poison) that causes damage to the lining of the large bowel.

Can *C. difficile* be harmful?

- About 1-3% of all people carry *C. difficile* in their stool without having any symptoms.
- Sometimes after a person has been given an antibiotic for another infection, the *C. difficile* will overgrow and produce enough toxin to cause illness.
- Symptoms of *C. difficile* disease can include: diarrhea or loose stools, fever, abdominal pain and abdominal cramps.
- In some cases diarrhea may be mild, and the patient will improve without the need for treatment. However, it can sometimes be a more serious illness.

How did I get *C. difficile*?

- If you have had multiple hospital stays or are from a nursing home, you are at a higher risk to get *C. difficile*.
- If you are taking antibiotics, you are at a higher risk of getting *C. difficile*.
- *C. difficile* is spread by contact with the hands. Caregivers can unknowingly spread the germ during routine procedures between patients.
- *C. difficile* can also be spread through contaminated surfaces, objects, or equipment such as: bedrails, thermometers, toilet seats, wheelchairs, and commodes.

What will be different in my care?

- You will need to stay in your room.
- It is very important for all staff and visitors to wash their hands when they enter and leave your room
- Visitors and hospital staff coming into your room will need to wear gloves and yellow gowns to prevent them from picking up *C. difficile* and spreading it to other patients or the environment.
- Signs will be placed outside the room to remind everyone about the special precautions.

If you need to go to another part of the hospital for tests or treatments, you must wash your hands before you leave your room. Staff transferring you and helping with the tests will also need to wear gowns and gloves, and wash their hands carefully.

- Because *C. difficile* lives on objects in the room, your room will be cleaned twice daily.

What about family and visitors?

- Visitors are still welcome. Visitors must wash their hands when they enter and leave your room. They must also put on yellow gowns and gloves when they enter the room.
- If any of your family members or visitors are experiencing diarrhea, please ask them to notify Infection Control, and ask them not to visit until they are better.

Will the *C. difficile* go away?

- *C. difficile* can be treated with antibiotics. You will get better. Occasionally, the diarrhea can come back. If this happens, you will need to be treated again.
- Once we are sure that the diarrhea will not reoccur, the added precautions will be stopped.