

## If I do have *C. difficile*, will it go away?

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

## 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.

## For more information contact Infection Control

Phone: 416-586-3118

Page through locating: 416-586-5133



## Wash your hands often and well.

---

**Mount Sinai Hospital**  
600 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
M5G 1X5

416-586-3118  
[www.mtsinai.on.ca](http://www.mtsinai.on.ca)



Department of Infection Control

## Special Isolation Precautions after contact with *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*)

Information for patients  
and visitors



You have had contact with a person who has 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 over grow 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. However, it can sometimes be more serious.

### **Who might have these germs?**

- People who have been in hospitals, rehab facilities, or long term care facilities are more at risk of having these germs.
- People who are taking antibiotics are at higher risk of getting *C. difficile*.

### **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, 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.

- Infection Control personnel will monitor your condition on a daily basis to make sure you do not have any *C. difficile* symptoms. Once it is established that you are not at risk of getting this germ based on your ongoing condition and lab results, there will no longer be a need for the special precautions.

- 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.

### **How will I know if I have *C. difficile*?**

- If you are having diarrhea, your doctors will send a stool sample for testing to make sure you do not have *C. difficile*.

### **What about family and visitors?**

- Visitors are still welcome. They 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 having diarrhea, please ask them to notify Infection Control, and ask them not to visit until they are better.