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.
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.
- 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*.
- 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.

**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.