



## ***Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI)**

### **What is *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI)?**

*Clostridium difficile* (C diff or *C difficile*) is a bacterium that causes mild to severe diarrhea in people who have taken antibiotics for an extended period of time. It is a leading cause of healthcare-associated diarrhea in Canadian hospitals.

### **What are the symptoms?**

The most common symptoms are: watery diarrhea, fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain and tenderness.

### **Who is at risk for *Clostridium difficile*?**

Individuals who have taken antibiotics for an extended period of time, those who are hospitalized and the elderly are at risk.

### **Can *Clostridium difficile* be treated?**

Yes, there are antibiotics that can be used to treat the infection. People with mild symptoms may not need treatment.

### **How is it spread?**

*Clostridium difficile* bacteria are found in feces. It is usually spread from one person to another as a result of contamination of the environment with feces or on hands that are contaminated with feces.

### **What can be done to prevent the spread?**

- Only take antibiotics as prescribed by your doctor
- Be sure to clean your hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before eating

### **What are some of the things that hospitals are doing to prevent CDI?**

To prevent infections, healthcare workers should:

- Clean their hands before and after caring for every patient
- Carefully clean hospital rooms and medical equipment
- Use special precautions for patients with CDI
  - a private room with a sign
  - wear gloves and a gown when providing direct care
  - provide advice to patients and visitors on the precautions required

### **What should I do at home if I have CDI?**

- Listen to the advice of your doctor and nurse
- Wash your hands often, especially before eating and after using the toilet
- Encourage family members to wash hands
- If you develop more diarrhea, tell your doctor immediately
- Return to your normal routine

**If you require further information, contact your healthcare professional or the HealthLine.**

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