**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.

April 18, 2013