

Hand hygiene is key to infection prevention

How to wash your hands:

- Apply alcohol based hand rub
or
- Wet hands with water
- Apply soap
- Rub hands together for 15 seconds
- Rinse hands well
- Dry hands with paper towel
- Turn off tap with used paper towel

Thank you for your help and cooperation

2.4.6

This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask your physician, local health unit or health care professional.

This information was obtained from the following source:

Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee (2013). *Testing, surveillance and management of Clostridium difficile in all health care settings.*

Retrieved March 7, 2014 from http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC-IPC_Annex_C_Testing_SurveillanceManage_C_difficile_2013.pdf

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Clostridium Difficile



Patient/Visitor Information

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What is *Clostridium difficile*? (*C.diff*)

C.diff is the leading cause of infectious diarrhea among patients in hospital.

Patients can carry *C.diff* bacteria in their bowel and if they are healthy it is usually harmless. But for patients on antibiotics, this otherwise harmless “bug” can become harmful. Antibiotics may kill off healthy bacteria in the bowel, allowing the bug to produce a toxin that causes diarrhea. *C.diff* is now the leading cause of infectious diarrhea among patients in hospitals throughout North America.

Who is at risk?

Anyone receiving antibiotics is at higher risk of acquiring an infection from *C.diff*. This risk factor increases in the elderly, and those undergoing abdominal surgery or chemotherapy.

How is it spread?

C.diff is spread through contact, either directly with a person who is infected or by touching a contaminated surface—like a toilet seat or door knob—and then touching your mouth.

Good hand washing practices are essential. Wash your hands very well before eating and after use of the bathroom.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of *C.diff* include frequent non-bloody watery diarrhea, fever, loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal pain and tenderness.



Wash hands frequently with soap and water

How can I prevent it from spreading?

Handwashing and personal hygiene are very important. Wash hands carefully with soap and water after using the toilet.

Patients who have *C.diff* may be moved to a private room and must be put on “Contact precautions” while they are experiencing diarrhea. All caregivers must wear gowns and gloves to prevent the spread to other patients.

Can *C.diff* be treated?

YES, *C.diff* is treated with an antibiotic called Metronidazole (flagyl) and/or Vancomycin.