

**Clostridium difficile
Associated Diarrhoea
(CDAD)**

Information for patients and visitors



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This leaflet is available in other formats and languages. If you require this leaflet in Braille, on audio tape or cd, in large print or another language please telephone 01904 725796.



This leaflet aims to provide information for patients with *Clostridium difficile* Diarrhoea, and to answer frequently asked questions about the condition.

If after reading this leaflet, you are still unsure about the condition and what it means to you please speak to nursing staff who will answer your questions or ask an Infection Prevention Nurse to talk to you.

What is *Clostridium difficile*?

Clostridium difficile (also known as *C. diff*) is a bacterium (bug) that produces a toxin (a type of poison) that can cause inflammation of the bowel.

What are the symptoms of *C. diff*?

The usual symptoms are diarrhoea, fever and stomach pains. In some cases the diarrhoea may contain mucus (it may be slimy) or blood and will have a foul smell.

How did I get *C. diff*?

C. diff can be part of the normal bacteria that live in your bowel without causing you any harm. Taking certain antibiotics can change the normal balance of the bacteria which live in your bowel making it easier for the existing *C. diff* to grow and cause an infection. People over 65 years old are more at risk of developing *C. diff*.

Can it spread to other people?

C. diff can spread to other people. It is spread either directly via hand to hand contact or indirectly by contamination of equipment such as a chair or table and your surrounding environment. This means it is important to always wash your hands well and keep equipment and the surrounding environment clean and disinfected as this will help prevent it from spreading.

Are my visitors at risk of catching *C. diff*?

No, if they are healthy and not taking antibiotics they are not at any increased risk of catching *C. diff*. It is still very important that visitors **wash** their hands well followed by using disinfectant hand gel before and after visiting **any** patient.

Infection Prevention and Control measures

You will be cared for in a single room preferably with your own toilet if you have diarrhoea. Your activities outside that room may also be limited until you have been free of diarrhoea for 48 hours to prevent the risk of *C. diff* spreading. If a room with a toilet is unavailable, you will have your own commode or bedpan. All equipment will be cleaned and disinfected following each use using special wipes.

You must **wash** your hands and then apply disinfectant hand gel every time you use the toilet, commode or bedpan and before you eat. The nurses will help you if necessary.

It is important that all staff and visitors wash their hands when they come into or leave your room. Do not be shy about reminding everyone to wash their hands.

Staff will wear gloves and aprons when they are helping you to use the toilet or when they are removing any bedpans or commodes from your room.

It is important that your room is kept clean. Any spillages of faeces must be dealt with by the nurses straight away and the domestic staff should clean and disinfect your room daily using a bleach based disinfectant.

Every effort must be made to prevent *C. diff* from spreading. Good hand **washing** followed by use of a disinfectant hand gel are two important steps to carry out whenever you have used the toilet and before you eat. High standards of cleanliness in ward areas and disinfection of equipment and your environment will help to reduce the chance of a spread of infection.

Mild diarrhoea may resolve as soon as the antibiotics that caused the diarrhoea are no longer taken. If you need to keep taking these antibiotics or you have more serious diarrhoea, you may need to be treated by the use of another antibiotic, either Metronidazole or Vancomycin, which can be taken orally. Your doctor will decide on suitable treatment.

Can my personal laundry be washed at home?

Yes. Soiled laundry must be taken home in a tied plastic or carrier bag. Garments should be placed in a washing machine separately to other family members' laundry and washed on the hottest cycle they can withstand. The person handling the garments should wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.

Will *C. diff* stop me from going home?

Once medical and nursing staff feel that you are well enough to go home having *C. diff* will not prevent you from being discharged.

If you live in a nursing home/residential home, or long term care facility, you may not be transferred back there until you have been clear of diarrhoea for 48 hours.

Tell your GP of your recent *C. diff* infection if he is going to give you antibiotics.

If you require more information, please do not hesitate to ask the nursing staff to contact the Infection, Prevention and Control Team to come and talk to you or your relatives

Thank you.

Teaching and Training

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is involved in the teaching or training of medical staff who may be in attendance at some patient consultations. However, there is an 'opt out' option for any patient who prefers to see a doctor without training medical staff in attendance.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is located in the main entrance of the hospital. They can be contacted on telephone number 01904 726262, answer phone is available out of hours or via email pals@york.nhs.uk.

Trust Core Values

Meeting the needs of patients and carers is at the centre of everything we do. We hope that you found this leaflet useful and informative.

If you would like to comment on it, please contact Infection Prevention Nurses, Infection Prevention Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 725730.









If you require further information
please contact the Infection
Prevention Team, on telephone
number 01904 725860.

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