

Where can I get more advice and support?

Anyone who has had a diagnosis of Clostridium difficile infection or who is caring for someone with this infection can contact the Bridgewater Trust Infection Prevention and Control Team on:

Telephone: 01942 483878

Telephone: 01942 483879

Telephone: 01942 483880

Further information can be read on line or downloaded from NHS Choices by going to: www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx and searching the words 'Clostridium difficile'.

Local Community Pharmacy - Your local community pharmacies offer a wide range of services including information and general advice on symptom relief medicines as well as a prescription collection and delivery service.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

 www.twitter.com/Bridgewater_NHS

 www.facebook.com/BridgewaterNHS

Visit our website at: www.bridgewater.nhs.uk

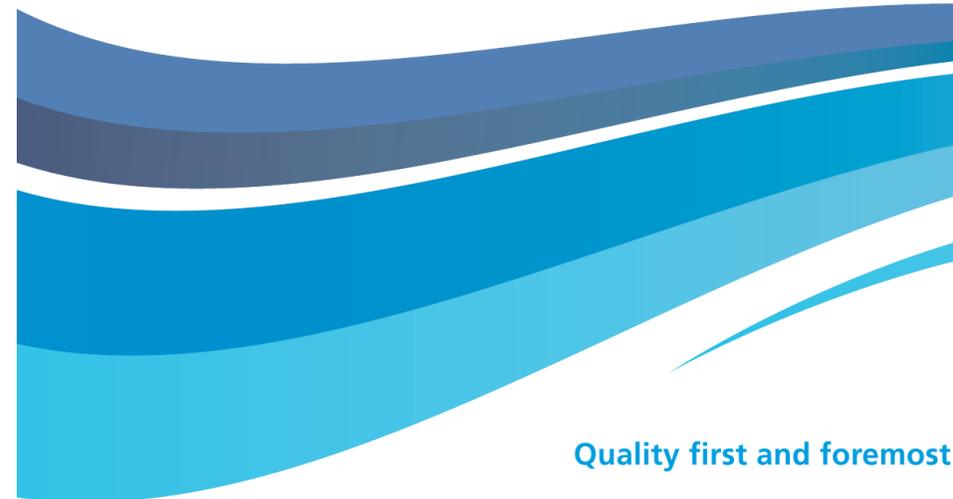
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reviewed by Bridgewater Lay Reader Panel

Bridgewater Community Healthcare 

NHS Foundation Trust

Infection, Prevention and Control Team

Information for patients diagnosed with Clostridium difficile



Quality first and foremost

What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile, often shortened to C-diff, is a bacterium (bug) which is found in the gut of a small number of healthy adults and children who may not have any signs of infection from it.

Infection mainly occurs after taking certain antibiotics which alters the gut flora (good bacteria) and allows Clostridium difficile bacteria to grow in number.

When patients suffer from diarrhoea and their stool (poo) sample grows Clostridium difficile it is called Clostridium difficile infection (CDI).

Some Clostridium difficile bacteria can produce toxins which leads to worsening diarrhoea and swelling of the bowel. Patients will need treatment if this occurs.

How did I get Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile is ingested (swallowed) and passed on when bacteria (spores) are released during bouts of diarrhoea.

You can become infected if you touch your mouth after touching furniture or equipment that have been covered in these spores.

People can also transfer the bacteria in healthcare premises and homes if hand hygiene (washing) is not done properly or the environment is not kept clean.

This infection is also linked to the over use of antibiotics so it is very important that antibiotics are taken and used appropriately

What if my symptoms are not settling?

If your symptoms of diarrhoea are not settling following completion of antibiotics, please contact your GP or Infection, Prevention and Control Nurse, as a further course of treatment or a different antibiotic may be needed.

DO NOT take any anti-diarrhoea medication such as imodium.

The antibiotics you have been prescribed should help stop your diarrhoea.

Why have I been given a green Clostridium difficile card?

You may have been given a 'green card' to alert other healthcare professionals about your infection with Clostridium difficile. This is only to help support better use of any future antibiotics which, if inappropriate, could restart this infection.

You only need to show this card to Doctors, Nurses, Dentists or your Pharmacist.

Can I have visitors?

Visitors are safe to visit you but should wash their hands when leaving your home.

Laundry

- Wash bed linen and towels at 60°C.
- Tumble dry if possible and iron.
- Personal clothing -wash at the highest temperature the fabric allows.
- Do not wash with other household laundry.

Diet

- Ensure plenty of drinks and fluids are taken, avoid fruit juices.
- Eat a light diet.
- Drinking probiotic drinks e.g. Actimel, Yakult, supermarket brand drinks may help.

Equipment

- All equipment on loan should be cleaned with a bleach solution prior to returning to the Community Equipment Store.
- Do not share any loaned equipment.

Social activities

- Stay at home whilst suffering from diarrhoea.
- Once free from diarrhoea for 48 hours normal social activities can be returned to.

Antibiotics

- Take treatment as prescribed by the GP, this is usually an antibiotic called Metronidazole for 10 days.

Hand washing is the most important method of reducing the spread of infection and Clostridium difficile bacteria.

You should therefore:

- Wet your hands with warm water and apply liquid soap – washing should take about one minute
- Rinse your hands under running water and dry them with a disposable paper towel.

Alcohol rubs do not kill Clostridium difficile bacteria!

Always follow the hand washing guidance opposite when washing hands, this will ensure hands are washed properly each time.



Managing your Clostridium difficile infection and diarrhoea

You should keep a record of your diarrhoea episodes so that you can observe any improvement in your condition.

Once the diarrhoea has stopped for at least 48 hours and your bowel motion is back to normal you are not considered to be infectious.

There is no need for you to do another stool (poo) specimen as the bacteria can remain in your gut for a number of months without causing you any problems.

You should contact your GP or the local Infection Control Specialist Nurse if your symptoms do not improve within seven days or if it gets worse, as you may require a further course of antibiotics.

If there are signs of fever, acute pain or abdominal swelling outside of GP surgery hours you should contact the out of hours GP service informing them of your Clostridium difficile diagnosis.

When symptoms of diarrhoea have stopped:

- Thoroughly clean bathrooms with a bleach solution using a disposable cloth.
- Wipe areas around the house with a bleach type detergent especially door handles, chair arms etc.
- Clean any carpet spills with disposable cloths and neutral detergent (do not use bleach).
- Dispose of used cloths in your household waste.

- All equipment should be cleaned and disinfected.
- Wash bedding and towels on the hottest temperature the fabric will allow.

How to stop the spread of Clostridium difficile infection

In your own home

If someone has symptoms of diarrhoea they should stay at home until they have been clear of diarrhoea for 48 hours.

Going to the GP, Hospital or other care facilities

Avoid going to the GP, hospital or any care facility when suffering from diarrhoea. If this cannot be avoided and a GP appointment is needed, inform the GP so that a suitable appointment time can be made.

Crockery and cutlery

Wash in hand hot soapy water; no additional precautions are required.

Cleaning

Clean toilets and bathrooms with a bleach solution (ratio 1 part bleach to 10 parts water) or detergent containing bleach.

Use disposable cloths

Wipe high risk areas such as toilet bowls and door handles/grab rails with a detergent e.g. washing up liquid using a disposable cloth.

Waste

Dispose of any incontinence pads etc. into household waste (double bagged).