

◆ THESE MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

- GOOD HAND HYGIENE! Clean Your Hands before you touch or eat food.
- Anyone providing close personal care, involving contact with wounds, urine or feces, must clean their hands before and after providing care.
- Wash your hands carefully after using the toilet.
- Stool-soiled laundry requires an extra wash in hot water; wash all other laundry as you would normally.
- All visitors should wash their hands before they visit, and when they leave, or use hand gel. You will find hand gel located in hospitals for your use. Hand washing is preferred.
- You will notice that health care providers wash their hands or use hand gel often. This very important aspect of health care helps to prevent the spread of diseases.

◆ DID YOU KNOW...

- Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to help minimize your risk of infection.
- You should not use drugs from a drugstore that will stop your diarrhea (i.e., immodium) if you have CDI. This may result in toxins staying inside of your colon.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

Additional health information is available through the
MGHS Health Information Center (906) 225-4950
or 1-800-562-9753, ext. 4950.

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UNDERSTANDING CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE



HEALTH INFORMATION GUIDE





This pamphlet has been written by the health care staff of Marquette General Health System to provide you with information about *C. Difficile*. After reading this pamphlet you should be able to:

- discuss *C. Difficile*
- how it is spread
- treatment for *C. Difficile*

WHAT IS CLOSTRIDIUM (C. DIFFICILE) DIFFICILE?

✿ *C. difficile* is a bacteria that is found in the intestines. It often causes mild to moderate diarrhea. Sometimes it can cause a more serious infection of the intestines, call colitis. In rare cases, infection with *C. difficile* can lead to death.

✿ WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The most common symptom is watery diarrhea, consisting of 3 or more bowel movements per day for 2 or more days. Other symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal cramping or tenderness.

HOW IS C. DIFFICILE DIAGNOSED?

If you are on antibiotics, or recently taken antibiotics, and you develop watery diarrhea and fever, your doctor may suspect CDI.

✿ *C. difficile* is diagnosed by testing your stool for the toxins that are produced by the bacteria.

AM I AT HIGH RISK?

✿ Antibiotic use is the most important risk factor for developing *C. difficile* disease. Other important risk factors are hospitalization, a stay in a nursing home, advanced age, a serious illness, a weakened immune system, or gastrointestinal surgery.

CAN C. DIFFICILE BE HARMFUL?

✿ About 1-3% of all people carry *C. difficile* in their stool without having any symptoms. Sometimes after a person has been given an antibiotic for another infection, the *C. difficile* will over grow and produce enough toxin to cause illness.

In some cases diarrhea may be mild, and will improve without the need for treatment. It can be a serious illness.

HOW CAN I GET C. DIFFICILE?

✿ *C. difficile* is spread by contact with the hands. *C. difficile* can be spread through contaminated surfaces, objects, or equipment such as: bed rails, thermometers, toilet seats, wheelchairs, and commodes. Caregivers can spread the germ during care between patients.

✿ WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR C. DIFFICILE?

If you develop this disease as a result of antibiotic use, your doctor may instruct you to stop taking the antibiotic. Your doctor may prescribe specific type of oral medications to treat your *C. difficile* disease.