

## What can reduce the risk of transmission?

- ◆ Wash your hands after using the toilet.
- ◆ Use a paper towel when turning off the faucet to avoid contaminating your hands.
- ◆ Wash your hands before eating.



### IMPORTANT!

Using a hydroalcoholic solution (antiseptic product) is not very effective against the spores of this bacteria. It is preferable to wash your hands with soap and water.



## What to do at home

The risk of developing diarrhea associated with *C. difficile* is very low for healthy people who are not taking antibiotics.

Continue practicing basic hygiene measures throughout the day, especially washing your hands with soap and water. It is most important to wash your hands after using the toilet and before eating.

It is important to disinfect the toilet, bathtub, and sink more frequently using a disinfectant product containing bleach. You can prepare a disinfectant solution yourself (one part bleach diluted in nine parts warm water).

If symptoms reappear after treatment, consult your doctor.

**Infection Prevention and Control Service**  
Service de prévention et contrôle des infections  
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## *C. difficile*

(*Clostridioides difficile*)



Information for patients, residents and their loved ones



Québec

# The results of a laboratory test show that you are carrying a type of bacteria called *Clostridioides difficile* (also known as *C. difficile* or *C. diff*).

## What is *C. difficile*?

*Clostridioides difficile* is a bacterium that can be found in the intestines of infected individuals. A small percentage of the population (around 5 %) are also carriers without any associated health problems. However, in some cases, changes in the intestinal environment can lead to multiplication of the bacteria. At this point, the bacteria produces a toxin (toxic substance) that causes diarrhea and inflammation of the colon.

## Who is at risk of contracting *C. difficile*?

Any patient who receives antibiotics is at risk of developing an intestinal infection caused by this bacterium. Hospitalization, being elderly, or having a weakened immune system are also factors that can increase the risk of contracting this infection.

## What are the symptoms?

The onset of symptoms can be as soon as 24 to 48 hours after starting antibiotic therapy or up to 6 to 8 weeks after completing it.

Symptoms include :

- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Abdominal pain
- ◆ Fever.

## How is this bacterium transmitted?

The spores produced by *C. difficile* allow it to easily survive in the environment for months. Transmission occurs through direct contact, mainly by contaminated hands. It can also be transmitted when hands come into contact with contaminated objects (e.g. : toilet flusher, faucets, door handles, etc.).

People who have the microbe on their hands ingest it, and it then develops within the intestine.

## What is the treatment?

Your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic treatment (Flagyl or Vancomycin). You must complete the treatment. It is important to note that you should stop taking other medications for diarrhea as they may promote the accumulation of toxins in the intestine.

## What does this mean for me?

During your stay in a healthcare facility, certain measures must be taken to protect other patients, such as :

- ◆ You will be placed in a private room with a toilet or dedicated commode chair, or in a room with another person infected with *C. difficile*.
- ◆ A sign indicating "Contact Precautions" will be posted on the door to your room.
- ◆ If you need to leave your room, you must follow these recommendations :
  - Wash your hands with **soap and water** before leaving the room and upon returning.
  - Wear clean clothes.
  - Follow instructions from the staff.
- ◆ Staff and visitors will take the necessary precautions when entering your room. Wearing gloves and protective gowns will be mandatory (healthcare setting), or based on risk (long-term care). Your visitors must not use the toilet in your room.
- ◆ In general, these precautions can be stopped 72 hours after the return of stools to their normal appearance and frequency. In some situations, this may take longer.