

What can I do to help?

In order to help prevent any spread into the environment, please wash your hands especially after using the toilet.

You can ask the staff looking after you to wash their hands or use alcohol hand rub and wear an apron and gloves before giving you any care.

What will happen when I go home?

You will normally stay in hospital until the diarrhoea has settled.

Some people can suffer a relapse of the diarrhoea and if this occurs, seek medical advice.

At home in most cases you will only need to use good standards of hygiene. Nursing staff will advise you if any other precautions are required.

How can I get more information?

The Infection Prevention and Control nurses visit each ward at least once per day; ask your nurse to contact us.

Alternatively, you can telephone the Infection Prevention and Control Team in the hospital on 4433 1181.

Contact details

Infection Prevention and Control

Townsville University Hospital
100 Angus Smith Drive
Douglas QLD 4814

Phone: (07) 4433 1181

Townsville Hospital and Health Service
100 Angus Smith Drive, Douglas QLD 4810

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C.diff Clostridium difficile

A guide for patients and families of the
Townsville Hospital and Health Service



What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile (C.diff) are bacteria present in the intestines of some people. They rarely causes problems in children and healthy adults.

C.diff causes diarrhoea when certain antibiotics disturb the normal gut bacteria.

What can C. diff cause?

The effects of C.diff vary from no symptoms to diarrhoea of varying severity.

In some cases it causes severe inflammation of the bowel which may require surgery.

Other symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, nausea and stomach pain.

How is C. diff treated?

Sometimes stopping the antibiotics you are on helps, and in other cases, a course of antibiotics is needed.

Who is at risk of infection?

Patients over 65 years of age, with an underlying illness, and those who are or have recently taken antibiotics.

How does C. diff spread?

Patients with C.diff pass the organism and spores during episodes of diarrhoea. The spores can survive in the environment and be passed on to other vulnerable patients by contaminated equipment or skin.

It is often spread by hands and that is why hand hygiene is so important.

It is OK for you to ask staff if they have washed their hands prior to touching you.



What will this mean for my hospital care?

All patients who have a positive result for Clostridium difficile will need isolation precautions to prevent the spread to other patients.

Ideally, you will be nursed in a single room and the staff will wear an apron and gloves to care for you.

An alert sign will be placed outside your door to inform all staff of the precautions required before giving you care.

If you have to move outside your room please wash your hands first. You should avoid visiting other patients.

Your visitors only need to wash their hands before visiting you and when they leave unless they are visiting other patients in the hospital. In that case they should also wear an apron and gloves when visiting you.