

Clostridium Difficile Infection (CDI)

INFORMATION BROCHURE

Are my family and friends at risk?

Yes, whilst you are "infectious". Clostridium difficile can be spread from person to person via the hands of anyone. Limit visitors whilst you are infectious. Those who visit should be reminded about hand hygiene with soap and water and wearing gowns and gloves to protect their clothing.

Do you need to do anything different when you go home?

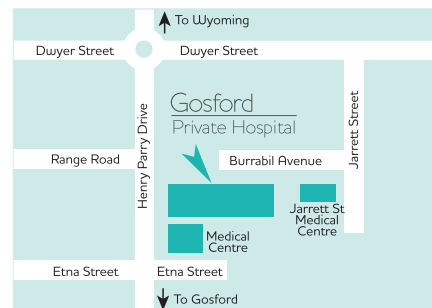
People who have had Clostridium difficile infection in hospital do not need special care when they return home, but should continue good hand hygiene.

You should stay home from work and limit your contact with other people until you have had 48 hours free of diarrhoea.

For any further enquiries please contact the Infection Control Coordinator on 02 4348 8511.



Helping to prevent
the spread of infection



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Hand Hygiene is the most important step in preventing the spread of a Clostridium Difficile Infection.



What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile is a bacterium that can be found in a person's intestines ("digestive tract" or "gut"). It does not cause infection or disease by its presence alone and it can be found in found in 2-5% of healthy persons' digestive tracts.

How does Clostridium difficile cause infection?

When the normal balance of bacteria in the gut is disturbed Clostridium difficile can multiply to levels where the toxins it produces causes illness such as diarrhoea and severe inflammation of the bowel. This is when you are said to have a Clostridium difficile infection.

How do you get a Clostridium difficile infection?

Clostridium difficile is most commonly caused by a disruption to normal gut flora.

Clostridium difficile bacteria produce spores (these are in the form of a cell that is resistant to chemicals), which leave the body in an infected person's diarrhoea. Clostridium difficile can be spread from person to person via the hands of anyone – including health care workers. This can occur by failing to wash hands properly after going to the toilet, or touching a contaminated surface or item.

Who is at risk of getting it?

Clostridium difficile infection can occur in anyone who has:

- Antibiotic treatment
- Prolonged hospitalisation
- Gastrointestinal surgery or manipulation of the gastrointestinal tract
- An immune system that is not working properly.

What are the main symptoms/diagnosis?

Clinical symptoms include:

- Watery diarrhoea
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain or tenderness.

It is important to note that not all patients who have Clostridium difficile have symptoms.

Clostridium difficile infection should be suspected in any hospitalised patient who develops diarrhoea after a course of antibiotics or in association with immune suppressive therapy. This is diagnosed from stool (faeces) samples. A stool sample is sent to the microbiology laboratory, where staff can test it for the organism and its toxins.

How do we stop it spreading?

If you have a Clostridium difficile infection, you are infectious; which means you can spread the illness to others.

Single rooms and **Contact Precautions** provide an extra physical barrier between patients, which is why you have been given your own room. Staff will be wearing gloves and long sleeved gowns when providing personal care to you. Your visitors may also be instructed to wear gloves and long sleeved gowns whilst visiting you.

Cleaning medical equipment between patient use and keeping the hospital clean is very important.

Hand Hygiene is very important. Remember to wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly after going to the toilet. Even closing the toilet lid prior to flushing will decrease the risk of spreading the spores!

Please feel free to remind your doctor, nurse or other health care workers about hand hygiene with soap and water.

You will be considered "non-infectious" when you have not had diarrhoea for at least 48 hours.