

At-home measures

The most effective and easiest way to prevent transmission of this bacterium, is **frequent handwashing with soap and water**, especially after using the bathroom.

The bathtub, shower and toilet should be cleaned on a daily basis or when visibly dirty by using your usual disinfectant product then rinsed with water. Afterwards, disinfect all bathroom surfaces with bleach (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).

There are no special measures to be taken when washing dishes, utensils and clothes of the person with *C. difficile*.

Can it be passed on to the family?

People who haven't taken antibiotics recently are at low risk for contracting a *C. difficile* infection. Transmission to family members or contracting *C. difficile* during social or professional events is very rare.



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Sources:

- Prévention et contrôle de la diarrhée nosocomiale associée au *Clostridium difficile* au Québec, INPSQ, février 2005
- UpToDate, Patient education: antibiotic-associated diarrhea
- Information sur le *Clostridium difficile*—Dépliant, MSSS, novembre 2004

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Québec 

 **DIGNE DE CONFIANCE,**
à chaque instant

Information for the user and family members

Clostridioides difficile diarrhea

Answers to frequently asked questions

Centre intégré
de santé et de
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What is Clostridioides difficile (C.difficile) colitis?

It's an infection caused by bacteria that produce a toxin causing irritation in the intestines.

Although diarrhea is the main symptom, other symptoms include:

- Abdominal pain and cramps.
- Nausea.
- Loss of appetite.
- Dehydration.
- Mucus in the stool.
- Fever.

How C. difficile is found?

An analysis of a liquid stool sample can determine the presence of this bacterium.

What are the risk factors for being a carrier?

- Previous or repeated hospitalizations.
- Recent use of antibiotics.
- Advanced age, chronic diseases or a weakened immune system.
- Recent history of C. difficile colitis.

How is this bacterium transmitted?

Transmission occurs through contact with hands or objects contaminated with feces (toilet flushers, sink taps, door handles, etc.). The bacterium can then be ingested orally and grow in the intestines (fecal-oral route transmission).

C.difficile has the ability to survive for a long time in the environment through the formation of a tough coated shell called a spore. The more frequent and profuse the diarrhea, the more the environment is likely to be contaminated.

How to avoid spreading this bacterium?

Hand hygiene with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of infection. Be aware that hydroalcoholic solutions are ineffective against the C.difficile bacterium.

When should we wash our hands?

- After using the toilet.
- When hands are visibly dirty.
- Before preparing, touching, serving or ingesting food.
- Before taking medication.
- After contact with blood or bodily fluids (stool, urine or vomit).
- Before and after caring for a C.difficile carrier.
- Before and after having contact with the environment of a C.difficile carrier.

What is the treatment?

Most of the time, oral antibiotic treatment is necessary. If the diarrhea persists or restarts in the weeks following medical treatment, you must immediately notify healthcare staff or your doctor. If symptoms persist, consult your doctor again. A C.difficile recurrence is possible, but the majority of people recover after receiving medical treatment.

Measures taken to prevent transmission in the hospital

- Once a C. difficile diagnosis is suspected or confirmed, additional contact precautions (isolation) must be taken. The goal is to prevent further contamination of the environment and the spread of the bacterium to other vulnerable people/patients.
- Long-sleeved isolation gowns and gloves will be required for staff and visitors.
- All equipment used during your treatment(s) will be disinfected after each use.
- You must wash your hands **with soap and water** after using the bathroom, your personal washbasin and before each meal.
- Visitors and healthcare staff must wash their hands upon entering the healthcare area. They will also have to wash their hands with soap and water upon leaving this area. Effective handwashing is the most important measure against transmitting C. difficile.

In general, the above measures can be stopped when normal stools resume, meaning having 3 consecutive days of formed stools.

If you are receiving healthcare services

It's important to notify healthcare staff that you are a carrier of C.difficile so that the necessary measures and precautions can be put in place.

If you are receiving homecare services, the nursing staff will also need to take special precautions. Wearing a gown or gloves may be necessary during your care.