



Jackson County Health Department Clostridium Difficile (C.difficile)



What is Clostridium Difficile (C. difficile)?

C. difficile is a bacterium that causes diarrhea and more serious conditions affecting the bowel, like colitis. The elderly and people with prolonged use of antibiotics are at a greater risk for *C. difficile* infections. *C. difficile* may also lead to a serious blood infection and rarely death. It is unusual to have *C. difficile* that is not associated with antibiotic therapy or hospitalization. *C. difficile* can be isolated from the soil and is commonly present in the environment.

How is C.difficile spread?

The contagious *C. difficile* bacteria are found in the feces of infected people. *C. difficile* spreads when a person touches an object or surface that is contaminated with infected feces and then touches his/her mouth, eyes or nose. Health care workers can spread the disease by not practicing good hand washing techniques.

How is C.difficile treated?

C. difficile is usually treated for 10 days with an antibiotic prescribed by a healthcare provider.

How can C.difficile be prevented?

- Take antibiotics as prescribed.
- Practice good hand washing techniques.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom yourself and after caring for someone with a diarrheal illness.
- Clean surfaces in frequently used areas, especially kitchens and bathrooms.

Symptoms of C. difficile:

- Watery diarrhea (at least 3 loose stools per day for 2 or more days)
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain or tenderness

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CDC Public Information

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