

## CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. diff) FACT SHEET

### What is Clostridium difficile?

C. diff is a spore-forming bacteria that is found in feces and causes diarrhea and more serious conditions such as colitis (inflammation of the colon), blood infections and even death.

C. diff can be a side effect of taking antibiotics.

### How can it be spread?

- C. diff can live outside the human body for a long time and may be found in items in the environment such as bed linens, bathroom fixtures and medical equipment
- Individuals can become infected by touching items or surfaces contaminated with feces and then touching their face, mouth, eyes or nose

### What are the symptoms?

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

**If you experience these symptoms, see your health care provider.**

### How is it treated?

- Generally treated with a 10-day course of a different antibiotic
- Take antibiotics only as prescribed by your doctor and complete the prescribed course of treatment. Antibiotics can be lifesaving medicines

### How can it be prevented?

- Limit use of antibiotics
- Wash hands before eating and after using the bathroom
- Try to use a separate bathroom if you have diarrhea, or be sure the bathroom is cleaned well if someone with diarrhea has used it

More information: <http://www.cdc.gov/cdiff>

