

CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. diff) FACT SHEET

What is clostridium difficile?

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

Symptoms of C. diff might develop after taking antibiotics.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- 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 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.

How is it spread?

- By touching items or surfaces contaminated with feces and then touching your face, mouth, eyes, or nose

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.

How is it treated?

- It is 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.

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

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

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