

How can I prevent spread to other people?

To protect the people around you from infection we recommend:

- using soap and hot water to wash your hands after using the toilet, as well as before eating or preparing food
- using separate towels and washcloths from others in your household
- cleaning surfaces, toilets, door handles and other frequently touched areas, at least once daily with a chlorine-based product e.g. household bleach.

Please note that hand sanitisers are not effective against c-diff.



You should stay away from work, school or nursery until 48 hours after your last episode of loose stool.

Further information and help

If you would like further information contact:

Health Protection Team
37 South Beach
Stornoway
Isles of Lewis, HS1 2BB
Tel: 01851 708033
Email: wi.healthprotection@nhs.scot

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:



- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 1223135
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236) Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.

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Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

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Clostridium Difficile (C. diff)



What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile (C.diff) is a bacteria that some people may carry in their bowel. It is normally kept under control by the good bacteria in the bowel.

Certain antibiotics may change the natural balance of bacteria in the bowel. This allows C. diff to multiply and produce toxins that can make you ill.



Symptoms

You will most often have diarrhoea which may have a particularly unpleasant smell. Other symptoms may include stomach cramps, fever, nausea (feeling sick), loss of appetite and passing blood in your stool (poo).



How serious is C. diff?

In many cases C. diff is mild and may only last a few days.

Some people may get a more serious infection which can last for several weeks and require complicated treatment. Symptoms of severe infection include more frequent diarrhoea which may be bloody, fever, severe abdominal cramps, dehydration, nausea, loss of appetite and weight loss.



How does C. diff spread?

C. diff is passed out of the body in the poo of people who are carrying the bacteria. The bacteria can be spread to the surrounding area including toilet, clothing and furniture.

People can spread C. diff by not washing their hands effectively after using the toilet.

C. diff can survive for a long time in the environment; people can accidentally pick it up by touching surfaces then touching their mouth.

What treatment will I need?

Your doctor may recommend that you stop some of your medications while you are unwell. You will likely be prescribed a specific antibiotic to help clear up the infection.

How will I know if I have C.diff?

You will be asked to give a stool sample which will be sent to the lab for testing. If your sample is positive, your GP surgery will contact you to discuss the results.