



# Hôpital **Montfort** Hospital

## **Patient Information Sheet** *Clostridium difficile (C. difficile)*

### **What is *C. difficile*?**

*C. difficile* is one of the many types of bacteria that can be found in the environment and the intestines. For most people, it does not pose a health risk. However, people who have been on antibiotics are at greater risk of developing an infection with *C. difficile*, because these drugs disrupt the balance of bacteria in the intestine. It usually causes mild to moderate diarrhea, which may be accompanied by abdominal cramps and fever.

### **How do people get *C. difficile*?**

The bacteria is present in the feces of sick people with a *C. difficile* infection. It can be transmitted from one person to another by bringing to the mouth objects or hands contaminated with stools.

### **Can *C. difficile* be treated?**

Yes. Sometimes, stopping the antibiotics that you are taking can stop the *C. difficile* infection, because the normal bacteria grow back and take control again. There are other antibiotics that can be used to treat *C. difficile* infection.

### **Can my family and friends get *C. difficile*?**

Healthy people who are not taking antibiotics are at very low risk of getting *C. difficile* infection. Handwashing with soap and water is the most efficient way to protect family, friends and visitors.

### **What should I do at the hospital?**

Always wash your hands before eating and after using the bathroom. Remind others, including your doctors and nurses, to wash their hands before touching you. If you have diarrhea that splashes on to the floor or another surface in your room, tell your nurse immediately, as it will need to be properly cleaned.

### **Why are special precautions or isolation needed?**

To help protect everyone, we use gowns and gloves when we care for someone who has *C. difficile*. Visitors who come to see you while you are on isolation will also need to wear a gown and gloves and wash their hands upon entering and exiting the room.

### **What should I do when I go home?**

#### **Hand Hygiene:**

Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds:

- before handling food
- before eating
- after using the toilet
- after touching dirty or contaminated surfaces

Also, remind other people in your home to wash their hands regularly. If your caregivers must handle feces, they should wear gloves and wash their hands when they take the gloves off.

**Housecleaning:** An all-purpose, regular household cleaner can be used for cleaning. Toilets and bathrooms need extra attention. If feces have splashed onto a surface, they must be removed first, and then clean with the household cleaner. If it is possible, use your own bathroom until your diarrhea stops.

**Laundry:** If clothes are soiled with feces, they should be washed separately after rinsing off the stools. Hot water with a regular laundry detergent and drying clothes in a dryer are helpful to remove the bacteria.

**Dishes:** Regular cleaning of dishes, either in a sink with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher is fine.

**Medicine:** Take all your medication as prescribed by your doctor. Do not use any drugs from the drugstore that will stop your diarrhea (e.g. Imodium®).

**Talk to your doctor:** If the diarrhea does not stop, or comes back, contact your doctor.