

Clostridioides difficile infection (CDI)



Montfort

Hôpital universitaire
Academic Hospital

What is a CDI?

Clostridioides difficile is a bacterium that lives in some people's intestines. These bacteria can multiply and produce a toxin that irritates the intestine and causes diarrhea. We call this a CDI. Use of antibiotics is often linked to the development of CDI because they make it easier for *Clostridioides difficile* to grow in the intestine.

What are the symptoms of a CDI?

Common symptoms include diarrhea, which may or may not contain mucus and/or blood, abdominal pain or cramping, fever, nausea and loss of appetite. Most people who get a CDI recover completely. Sometimes, however, the infection can be serious and result in complications.

How can I tell if I have a CDI?

A sample of your stool will be lab-tested for *Clostridioides difficile* and its toxins.

Is a CDI contagious?

The *Clostridioides difficile* bacterium can remain active on your hands and other surfaces (such as tables or door knobs) for a long time. It can then be passed along to other people at risk, who might develop an infection.

What puts someone at risk of getting a CDI?

You are at risk if you are taking or recently took antibiotics, if you were hospitalized for a long time, if you are elderly, have a severe illness or are taking cancer therapy or if you have had intestinal surgery.

How is a CDI treated?

In some situations, you may have to stop taking antibiotics. Your doctor may give you other antibiotics effective against *Clostridioides difficile*. To avoid dehydration, drink plenty of water. In rare cases, people may need surgery to remove the part of their intestine most severely affected by the illness.

What steps does the hospital take to control the infection?

We ask you not to leave your room except for medical tests or treatments, and to wash your hands after using the toilet.

Staff who enters your room will wear gloves (and sometimes a gown) and will wash their hands when they leave. Medical equipment in the room will be cleaned with a powerful disinfectant after it is used.

Your room will be cleaned twice a day. These measures will remain in place for as long as your CDI is active.

Can I still have visitors?

Yes. Visitors must wash their hands and wear a gown and gloves before entering your room. Your visitors should not sit on your bed or use your toilet. They must also wash their hands when they leave your room.

Once I recover, can I get *Clostridioides difficile* infection again?

Yes. In some patients, the CDI can reoccur. Contact your doctor if you notice new symptoms and mention that you recently had a CDI.

What can be done at home?

You can go home once your doctor is sure that the treatment is effective and your health is not at risk.

In some cases, your treatment may continue at home. The chances of passing along the illness to someone in the same home are low.

You can follow these few rules to help reduce the risk of transmitting the illness to others, or reinfecing yourself with spores found on surfaces in your house:

- Take antibiotics only as recommended by your doctor, carefully following your doctor's instructions.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet and before preparing food.
- Anyone who lives with you should follow the same hand-washing recommendations mentioned above.
- Clean surfaces often using a disinfectant.
- Clean your bathroom daily with a sporicidal product, or with a bleach solution (1 part 5% bleach + 9 parts water)

713 Montreal Road, Ottawa ON

T 613.746.4621

hopitalmontfort.com