Clostridium Difficile (C. diff)

What You Need to Know

Clostridium difficile is one type of bacteria commonly found in the digestive tract. It is also called “C. diff.” When you take antibiotics, the natural balance of your digestive tract can be upset. This allows some bacteria to multiply out of control, which can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps and fever.

Treatment

C. diff can be treated with specific medicines. Two of the most frequently used medicines are metronidazole (Flagyl) and vancomycin. Your doctor will work to develop a care plan for you.

To Prevent the Spread of Clostridium

To help prevent the spread of C. diff:

- Contact Precautions are used with patients who have diarrhea. Everyone who enters the room should wear gloves and a gown. Staff members wear a gown and gloves when they enter the room and may have direct contact with the patient or the items in the patient's room.

- Wash your hands! C. diff is found in stool (bowel movements). Proper hand hygiene can prevent the spread of bacteria to surfaces in the room of patients with diarrhea. It can be spread from person to person through contact with patients or the surfaces in the patient's environment. Alcohol hand sanitizer is not effective for killing this type of bacteria.
Leaving Your Room and Visitor Policy

To avoid the spread of germs to others, we encourage you to stay in your room. When leaving your room, you must put on a clean gown and wash your hands with soap and water. Visitors may come to see you. They will be asked to wear gloves and gown when they enter the room. They should remove the gloves and gown, and wash their hands with soap and water before they leave your room.

Home Care

Family members should also wash their hands before and after caring for you. Wear gloves if contact is made with blood or bodily fluids such as stool.

- Always wash your hands after removing the gloves. Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of C. diff.
- Clean surfaces in the bathrooms, kitchen, and other areas on a regular basis with a household disinfectant or diluted bleach. Use one-half (½) cup of bleach in 1 quart of water.

For More Information

Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have questions about C. diff, Contact Precautions, or any aspect of your care and treatment.

You may also ask for these patient education materials.

- Preventing the Spread of Infection
- Infection Control Guidelines
- Hand Washing

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.