



## What is the correct way to wash my hands?

- Turn on water
- Apply soap
- Lather for 15 seconds rubbing all surfaces of hands and wrists
- Rinse under running water with fingers pointing down
- Pat dry with paper towel
- Turn off faucet with paper towel

## Want more information?

Additional information can be found at the following links:

[https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cdiff/cdiff\\_infect.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hai/organisms/cdiff/cdiff_infect.html)

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id\\_CdiffFAQ\\_newstrain.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_CdiffFAQ_newstrain.html)



**DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

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# CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE (C. diff.)

## Patient Education



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## What is a C. diff infection?

*Clostridium difficile* (C. diff) is a germ that normally lives in the stomach and intestines. This germ can produce toxins that cause diarrhea. Some people do not get sick from having C. diff but some can have serious illness.

## What are the symptoms?

- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal pain/tenderness
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea

## What increases my risk?

- Taking antibiotics
- Having surgery
- Being in a health care facility for an extended period of time
- Having a serious, underlying illness
- Advanced age

## If I have it, can it be spread?

C. diff is spread by stool. Any surface that becomes contaminated with stool may spread the disease. It can be spread from unwashed hands or from unclean items that are shared. When someone touches the dirty item and then touches his or her mouth, therefore ingesting it, he or she can get sick.



## Is there treatment?

C. diff happens when people take antibiotics. The germ can start in two to three days after you have stopped taking antibiotics. One type of C. diff can produce a large amount of toxins and is harder to treat. This is where other antibiotics, such as Vancomycin and Flagyl, can be used to treat.

## How will you be cared for?

In the hospital, you may be put in a private room with contact precautions to prevent the spread of C. diff.

In long term care (LTC) and rehabilitation facilities you may be with a roommate, but still on contact precautions with your own bathroom.

Healthcare workers caring for you will wear a gown and gloves when providing care for you until you finish treatment and no longer have diarrhea. Wearing a gown and gloves helps to protect clothes and hands to decrease the spread of C diff germs. Everyone must wash their hands before entering and when leaving your room.

## What else should be done?

- At home, all family members must wash their hands well with soap and water after using the bathroom and before eating
- Shower daily and wear clean clothes.
- C. diff germs cannot be removed with alcohol rub. Hands must be washed with soap and water.
- Clothes or bed linens dirtied with diarrhea must be washed separately in the washing machine with hot water, detergent, and bleach if fabric compatible. Machine dry if possible.
- While having diarrhea, clean the bathroom with a diluted bleach solution. Be sure to clean any object that has been contaminated with stool; faucet handles, flush handles, door knobs.
- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces often in your home, such as faucet handles, toilet flushes, bedrails, door knobs etc. as much as possible.