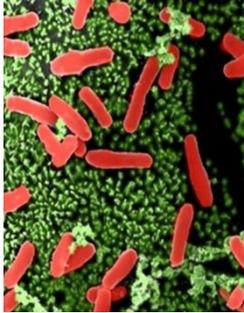


Clostridioides difficile (*C. difficile*)



What is *C. difficile*?

Previously known as *Clostridium difficile*. A spore forming bacteria that lives harmlessly in the bowel of up to 3% of healthy adults and 66% of babies.

Antibiotics disturb the balance of good bacteria in the gut allowing *C. difficile* bacteria to multiply rapidly causing diarrhoea.

C. difficile colonisation

Bacteria are present in the bowel, but not producing toxins that cause diarrhoea.

This may be a long term condition and isolation is not required in a care home (unless symptomatic).

Symptoms, if present, are usually very mild and antibiotic treatment is not normally required.

C. difficile infection

Bacteria are present and producing toxins causing symptoms that can range from mild to severe.

Isolation is required until 48 hours symptom free and a formed stool, Bristol Stool Form Scale type 1-4.

Antibiotic treatment will be prescribed to kill the *C. difficile* bacteria.

A clearance stool sample is not required following treatment.

How is *C. difficile* spread?

Spores can survive for long periods in the environment if cleaning is inadequate.

From person-to-person by direct contact.

From contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment.

To the next person on contaminated hands that have not been washed thoroughly.

Hand-to-mouth action such as when eating from unwashed hands.

Help stop the spread of *C. difficile*

Maintain a high standard of cleaning.

Use liquid soap and warm running water for washing hands.

Do not use alcohol handrub alone, as this is not effective against *C. difficile*.

Further information can be found at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/clostridioides-difficile-policy-for-care-home-settings/