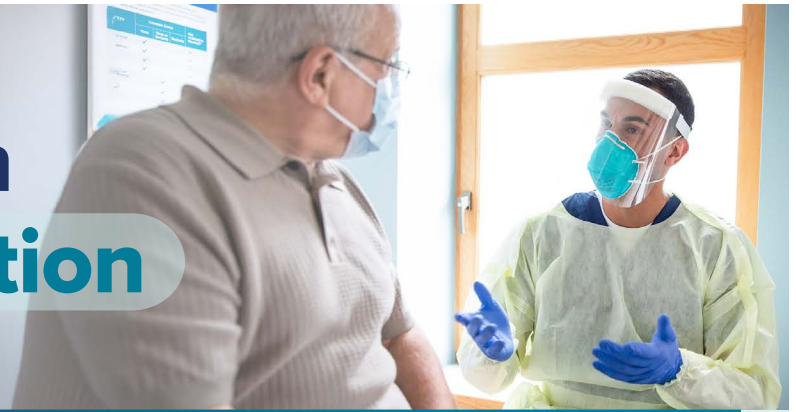


# The progression of a *C. diff* infection



*C. diff* is a bacterium (germ) that causes diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon).  
*C. diff* infections can be life-threatening.



***C. diff* infection can affect anyone. Most cases of *C. diff* infection occur while you're taking antibiotics or not long after you've finished taking antibiotics. Other risk factors include:**

- Previous infection with *C. diff* or known exposure to *C. diff* germs
- Older age (65 or older)
- Recent stay in a hospital or nursing home (e.g., within the past 3 months)
- A weakened immune system, such as people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or organ transplant patients taking immunosuppressive drugs



**Symptoms of *C. diff* infection can include:**

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach tenderness or pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Dehydration



**If your symptoms are severe, you might need to be treated in the hospital.**

- A healthcare professional will use precautions such as wearing gloves and gowns to protect others from *C. diff*.



**If you develop symptoms of *C. diff* infection while or after taking an antibiotic, contact a healthcare professional.**

- A healthcare professional will evaluate you for *C. diff* infection.
- If you are diagnosed with *C. diff* infection, a healthcare professional will discuss the treatment plan.



**After you've recovered, you could still be colonized with *C. diff* germs.**

- The *C. diff* germs may be in your body, but you won't feel sick and you won't need treatment.
- But you can still spread it to others, so always practice good hand hygiene.
- If you have been sick and have recovered, tell a healthcare professional that you've had *C. diff* recently.



**About 1 in 9 people who get *C. diff* infection will get it again in the subsequent 2–8 weeks.**

- If you have symptoms of *C. diff* infection again, see a healthcare professional.
- For those with repeat infections, fecal microbiota products have shown promising results.

***C. diff* is contagious, but you can keep others from getting it.**



- Wash your hands with soap and water every time you use the bathroom and always before you eat.
- Try to use a separate bathroom if you have diarrhea.
- Take showers and use soap.



Learn more at  
[cdc.gov/c-diff](https://cdc.gov/c-diff)

