**CLOSTRIDIIOIDES DIFFICILE**  
(formerly known as Clostridium difficile)

**IMPACT**

*C. diff* infection is estimated to cause almost half a million illnesses in the United States each year, and an estimated 29,300 deaths.  

About 1 in 6 patients who get *C. diff* infection will get it again in the subsequent 2–8 weeks.  

One in 11 people over 65 diagnosed with a healthcare-associated *C. diff* infection die within a month.

**RISK**

People are 7 to 10 times more likely to get *C. diff* infection while taking an antibiotic and during the month after.  

Extended stays in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes, also increase their risk.  

More than 80% of *C. diff* deaths occur in people 65 and older.

**SPREAD**

*C. diff* spreads when people touch surfaces that are contaminated with poop from an infected person.  

Or when people don’t wash their hands with soap and water.  

It can also happen when one healthcare facility fails to notify another when it transfers a patient with *C. diff*.

Healthcare professionals can help **PREVENT** *C. diff* by:

- Optimizing the way they prescribe antibiotics.  
- Using the tests that give the most accurate results.  
- Rapidly identifying and isolating patients with *C. diff*.  
- Wearing gloves and gowns when treating patients with *C. diff*—and remembering that hand sanitizer doesn’t kill *C. diff*.  
- Cleaning surfaces in rooms where *C. diff* patients are treated with EPA-approved, spore-killing disinfectant (see list K).

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