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

C. diff can infect 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 the germs
- Being 65 or older
- Recent stay at a hospital or nursing home
- A weakened immune system, such as people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or organ transplant patients taking immunosuppressive drugs

If you have signs or symptoms, see a doctor.

- The doctor will review your signs and symptoms and order a lab test.
- If it’s positive, you’ll take an antibiotic for 10 days.

After you’ve recovered, you could still be colonized.

- The germs will be in your body, but you won’t feel sick. So you won’t need treatment.
- But you can still spread it to others, so always practice good hand hygiene.
- Tell all of your healthcare providers that you’ve had C. diff.

Some people get C. diff over and over again.

- For those with repeat infections, fecal microbiota transplants 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.