

C. diff risk: How to help your loved one

C. diff is a germ carried in poop that causes severe diarrhea, dehydration, and inflammation of the colon. Most healthy adults who come in contact with *C. diff* won't get sick, but if your family member is taking antibiotics or has been in the hospital or a nursing home, they are at greater risk for developing an infection. You can take steps to help protect your loved one and prevent the spread of *C. diff*.

In a healthcare setting

C. diff is more common in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes.

- Make sure all healthcare professionals clean their hands before and after caring for your loved one. Ask healthcare professionals to clean their hands if you don't see them do so.
 - Remind your loved one to wash their hands with soap and water before eating and after using the restroom.
 - Follow your facility's instructions about wearing gowns and/or gloves while visiting your family member.
 - Talk with a healthcare professional to understand why the antibiotics your family member has been prescribed are necessary.
 - If your family member has had a *C. diff* infection before, make sure the healthcare professional knows that. This can help them make the best decision when prescribing antibiotics, even at the dentist.



At home

You can come in contact with *C. diff* germs and not get sick. But that doesn't mean you can't spread the germs to others.

- Washing hands with **soap** and **water** for at least **15 seconds** is the best way to prevent the spread from person to person. Always wash your hands before and after caring for your loved one, after using the bathroom, and before you eat.
- Try to use a separate bathroom if your loved one has diarrhea. If you can't, disinfect all surfaces (like doorknobs and toilets) with a bleach cleaner routinely. Make sure to follow the instructions on the label.
- Call the doctor if your loved one experiences...
 - Severe diarrhea
 - Fever
 - Nausea
 - Stomach pain or tenderness
 - Loss of appetite

