

Clostridioides difficile in Health Care:

Recognize the Risk and Stop the Spread

What Is *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*)?

C. diff is a germ that causes severe diarrhea and inflammation of the colon. Most cases of *C. diff* infection occur during or soon after antibiotic use. *C. diff* spreads easily in hospitals and nursing homes and can lead to serious infections, especially in older adults and people with weakened immune systems.

Recognize the Risk of *C. diff*

C. diff lives in stool and easily spreads to skin and surfaces, including:

- high-touch and frequently contaminated surfaces such as toilets, bedrails, call buttons, bed sheets, and doorknobs.
- shared equipment and devices such as electronic thermometers and blood pressure cuffs.



C. diff spreads through touch, including:

- touching contaminated surfaces or equipment.
- touching infected patients or their environment.

C. diff is very hard to kill and can survive on surfaces for months. Environmental cleaning requires using a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff* germs (see EPA's list K*).

Stop the Spread of *C. diff*



- Clean your hands with soap and water after caring for a patient with *C. diff* infection.
- Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer will not remove or kill the *C. diff* germs on your hands.



- Use a gown and gloves when entering the room of a patient with *C. diff* infection.
- Remove your gown and gloves and clean your hands before leaving the patient's room to avoid spreading *C. diff* germs to other places and people.



- Clean and disinfect the patient's room and equipment daily with a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff*.
- Clean and disinfect shared medical equipment with a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff* prior to use with another patient.

Learn More

Preventing the Spread of *C. diff*: <https://bit.ly/4tfb9ya>

EPA's List K: <https://bit.ly/4sA6yGz>



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