

### Clostridium Difficile



Clostridium Difficile (C Difficile) is a spore forming bacteria and is a leading cause of infectious diarrhoea. C Difficile is present in the gut of 3% of healthy adults. Our "healthy" bacteria (normal flora) keep in check the growth of C Difficile. However, when antibiotics are given for an infection, the antibiotics can disturb the balance of bacteria in the gut and C Difficile can multiply rapidly producing poisonous toxins that cause diarrhoea or inflammation of the bowel. Diagnosis is confirmed by laboratory testing.

#### Risk factors for C Difficile

People most at risk of C Difficile are usually those over the age of 65 years and who have had any of the following:

- Recent antibiotic treatment (within 3 months)
- Recent hospital admissions
- Previous history of C Difficile
- Bowel interventions (Laxatives)
- Debilitated or immunosuppressed service users
- Proton pump inhibitor medication (Omeprazole)



#### What are the symptoms of C Difficile



- watery diarrhoea ranging from mild to severe which may have blood in it,
- abdominal pain/tenderness,
- fever.

The illness can have serious consequences, including death.

#### How is C Difficile spread?

C Difficile can spread from person to person and can cause outbreaks in hospitals/care homes. It is spread mainly by:

- Contaminated hands
- Contaminated surfaces and equipment, C Difficile spores can survive on surfaces for months and even years.

## Managing C Difficile

It is important to refer to your local guidance. To help reduce the spread of C Difficile, standard precautions should always be followed together with the following four key principles.

<b>1. Communication</b>	<b>2. Hand Hygiene</b>
<b>3. Isolation</b>	<b>4. Decontamination</b>

<b>1. Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any current antibiotic treatment should be urgently reviewed, consult medical staff as soon as possible.</li><li>Contact the service user's GP if there are any health concerns, e.g. dehydration, blood stained diarrhoea.</li><li>Service users with symptoms may be treated with a course of appropriate antibiotic for 10 -14 days</li></ul>
<b>2. Hand Hygiene</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Thorough hand washing is essential using liquid soap and warm water. <b>Alcohol hand rub does not kill spores and must not be used.</b></li><li>Encourage service users to wash their hands or use hand wipes after using the toilet and before meals to prevent re-infection.</li><li>Visitors should wash hands on entering and leaving.</li></ul>
<b>3. Isolation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In a health and social care setting, use isolation precautions and single room accommodation for affected service users.</li><li>When a service user is symptom free for 48 hours and has passed a formed stool (Type 1 – 4) they are no longer infectious and isolation precautions are no longer required. A negative stool specimen is not required.</li><li>The Bristol Stool Form Scale should be used to identify each stool typed passed.</li><li>Staff should wear disposable aprons and gloves when caring for someone with C Difficile, this is not necessary for visitors. . Visitors do not need to wear PPE.</li></ul>
<b>4. Decontamination</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Toilets and commodes should be cleaned after each use with chlorine based disinfectant solution.</li><li>Medical equipment must be cleaned before removal from the room with chlorine based disinfectant solution.</li><li>Clean the environment daily with chlorine based disinfectant solution.</li><li>Deep clean the room when the service user is symptom free for 48 hours and a formed stool has been passed.</li><li>For with C Difficile in their own home, the environment should be cleaned with household bleach, until they are symptom free for 48 hours and a formed stool has been passed.</li></ul>

## Test your knowledge

<i>Please tick the correct answer</i>	True	False
1. C Difficile is spread by contaminated hands, surfaces and equipment.		
2. Alcohol hand rub kills spores and can be used.		
3. Toilets and commodes should be cleaned after each use with chlorine based disinfectant solution.		






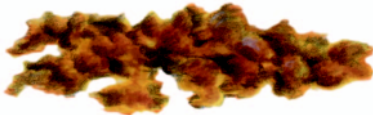

## Remember:

- When a service user is symptom free for 48 hours and has passed a formed stool, they are no longer infectious.
- Service users should be encouraged to wash their hands or use detergent hand wipes after using the toilet and before meals.

## Factsheet Activity *Please tick appropriate box when activity has been completed*

Check colleagues are aware not to use alcohol hand rub when caring for service users with C Difficile.	
Check that you have the correct disinfectant available.	

# THE BRISTOL STOOL FORM SCALE

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces ENTIRELY LIQUID

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