

## *Patient/Family Education about...*

# **Clostridium Difficile**

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### **What is Clostridium difficile (C. Diff)?**

Most often C. Diff occurs after treatment with antibiotics. Antibiotics may change the normal bacteria in the bowel allowing C. Diff to grow. When this happens, the person experiences stomach cramps, fever, and diarrhea.

### **Who gets C. Diff?**

These risk factors may increase your change of getting C. Diff: Antibiotics, or chemotherapy.

### **How is it treated?**

C. Diff is often treated with oral Flagyl or Vancomycin. A person will be treated for this if they are having symptoms. A person can have this bacteria without symptoms. If this is the case the person is usually not treated with medication.

### **How does it spread?**

It can be spread from person to person through contact with the person who has C. Diff or their environment. A patient in our hospital will be placed on contact isolation. Personnel will wear a gown and gloves in the room. C. Diff is found in the stool (bowel movements). It is important for a person with C. Diff to do good hand washing, and practice good personal hygiene especially after a bowel movement and before handling food.

### **Are my visitors at risk of getting this infection?**

Visitors should observe good hand washing; wearing gloves or gown is optional for visitors, but advised if the visitor has risk factors for acquiring C. Diff (see above). If the visitor is sick, or has a lowered immune system, they probably should delay their visit until you are well.