



Clostridioides difficile infection (c. diff)

Quick reference guide

+ What is Clostridioides difficile (C. diff)?

C-diff is a spore-forming bacteria that lives harmlessly in the bowel of 3-5% of healthy adults.

+ What is Clostridioides difficile infection (CDI)?

CDI occurs when antibiotics disturb the balance of good bacteria in the gut allowing c. diff bacteria to rapidly multiply and produce toxins causing diarrhoea.

+ Risk factors

Risk factors include age 65+, recent antibiotic/PPI use, prior C. diff infection or carriage, weakened immunity, recent healthcare contact, and history of bowel disease.

+ Symptoms

- New onset diarrhoea (Bristol stool type 5-7)
- Fever, abdominal pain, dehydration

+ Transmission

Spores spread mainly via the **faecal-oral route** through contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects and survive for long periods in the environment.

+ Management of a suspected/confirmed case - Follow (SIGHT) protocol

- S** Suspect if individual has new unexplained Type 5-7 stools.
- I** Isolate promptly in their own room with ensuite facility or dedicated commode. Keep the door closed and appropriate signage.
- G** Gloves & Apron for all contact with the individual and their environment.
- H** Hand washing with liquid soap and warm water only. Alcohol-based hand rub does **NOT** kill C diff spores.
- T** Test - send stool sample promptly.

Assessment: Refer to GP for medication review and medical assessment.

Diagnosis: Submit stool sample for C. diff testing.

Treatment: Managed by GP in accordance with [NICE guidelines NG199](#)

+ Follow your IPC measures!

- Prudent antibiotic prescribing
- Isolate 48h post-symptoms + formed stool
- Handwashing with soap & water
- PPE for contact & environment
- Regular cleaning and disinfection (1,000 ppm chlorine based disinfectant)
- Safe management of infectious linen / waste
- Delay transfers - notify of individual's infectious status in advance

+ When to Escalate

Get urgent GP/medical review if the individual shows signs of severe illness: fever, dehydration, severe abdominal pain, or deterioration.

[Click here for references](#)

