

What happens when I go home?

- You will not be discharged from hospital until you are well.
- If you require ongoing medical or nursing care while at home, then your carer will wear gloves and will continue strict hand hygiene.
- The infection will not affect your family or friends (including children) when you are home. Usual personal hygiene, laundering and household cleaning are sufficient. Restrictions to activities or visitors are not necessary.
- Please remember to keep your outpatients appointment. If you develop diarrhoea that persists for more than 48 hours, or if you have a fever, please see your local doctor or return to the Emergency Department.
- If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask staff on the ward.

Who can I contact?

Your medical team or the Infection Prevention and Control Unit
Level 3, Building C Frankston Hospital

Phone: (03) 9784 7722
Fax: (03) 9784 7576

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday 8.00am - 4.30pm
(Excluding Public Holidays & Weekends)

Disclaimer: The information contained in this brochure is intended to support not replace discussion with your doctor or health care professionals.

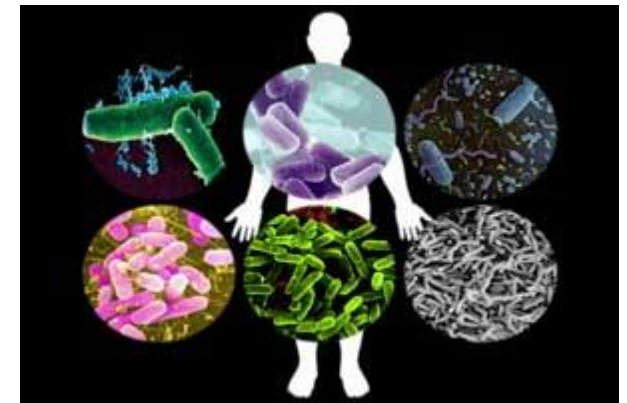
Print Code: 14058 – August 2015
Authorising Department: Infection Prevention & Control Unit

Peninsula Health
PO Box 52
Frankston Victoria 3199
Telephone (03) 9784 7777
www.peninsulahealth.org.au



Information on Clostridium difficile

(Antibiotic Associated Diarrhoea)



What is *Clostridium difficile*?

- *Clostridium difficile* is a germ that is found normally in the bowel of infants, some adults and patients in hospital. *Clostridium difficile* is a common cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea.
- The reasons why *Clostridium difficile* causes symptoms when antibiotics are taken is not completely understood. It is thought that the usual 'good' bacteria of the bowel normally prevent *Clostridium difficile* from causing any harm.
- When someone is on antibiotics, these good bacteria are reduced and the good bacteria are unable to protect the bowel against the *Clostridium difficile* germ.
- *Clostridium difficile* produces a toxin that can cause diarrhoea. It can range from mild diarrhoea to very severe and prolonged diarrhoea. It can also cause an acute inflammation of the bowel lining (called pseudomembranous colitis). Mild diarrhoea will stop as soon as antibiotics are finished. More severe symptoms will require treatment.

How do I know if I have it?

- Some of the common symptoms are watery diarrhoea, fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain or tenderness.
- If you are in hospital and suddenly develop unexplained diarrhoea - a faecal specimen will be collected and sent for examination in the laboratory.

- If the toxin related to *Clostridium difficile* is found it means you have this **infection**
- **Colonisation** is when you have *Clostridium difficile* in your bowel but have no symptoms.

Is treatment available?

- There are treatments available for *Clostridium difficile*. If treatment is required, your treating doctors will discuss this with you.
- Treatment usually consists of ceasing the current antibiotics and prescribing a different antibiotic specifically for treating the *Clostridium difficile* infection.
- Colonisation with *Clostridium difficile* does not require treatment.

How is it spread?

- When there is a patient with *Clostridium difficile* in a hospital, it can be easily spread by the hands of healthcare workers or contact with contaminated equipment or from surfaces.
- People who are at more risk of developing infection from *Clostridium difficile* are the elderly, those who have had certain types of antibiotics, and those patients who may have had a prolonged hospital stay. Good hand hygiene is very important to prevent the spread of the germ to others.

I have *Clostridium difficile*: can I spread it to others?

- If the toxin related to *Clostridium difficile* is found, you will be separated from other patients until your diarrhoea has stopped.
- You may be transferred to a single room on a different ward depending on your situation. Hospital staff will wear gloves and gowns when attending to your care, which will reduce risk of cross contamination to other patients.
- Preventing the spread of infection rests mainly by encouraging good hand hygiene practices amongst staff, visitors and patients.
- Because of the different types of infections in hospital, it is important that you do not visit patients in other areas of the ward or within the hospital whilst you have diarrhoea.

What about my visitors?

- Visitors do not need to wear a gown whilst visiting you in the ward unless assisting with your care but should not visit other patients elsewhere in the hospital.
- All visitors need to wash their hands on entering and leaving your room.
- Please do not allow visitors to sit or lie on your bed.