Are you dealing with disruptive Diarrhea?

What you need to know about C diff (Clostridium difficile)
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What is *C diff*?

*C diff* is a type of germ that can infect part of your digestive system, most often the intestines. These germs release toxins (chemicals) that can damage your intestines and cause diarrhea. You may also have a fever, lose your appetite, feel sick to your stomach, or have belly pain and tenderness.

*C diff* can damage this part of your body.

Could I have *C diff*?

**You may have a *C diff* infection if you have:**

- Watery diarrhea 3 or more times a day that lasts for several days
- Just finished or are currently taking an antibiotic
- Recently been in the hospital or long-term health care facility (such as a nursing home, skilled nursing facility, or assisted living facility)

**How do I get *C diff***?

Antibiotics can sometimes leave you open to getting *C diff*. Some antibiotics destroy the natural, healthy bacteria you have in your intestines. This allows *C diff* to grow and cause diarrhea. If you have a weakened immune system from an illness, like cancer or AIDS, you may be at greater risk for *C diff* diarrhea.

*C diff* can easily be spread to others. People get *C diff* when they touch surfaces that have *C diff* germs on them and then touch their mouth. Many people get *C diff* during a hospital stay.
What can I expect with *C diff*?

Some cases of *C diff* diarrhea are mild and get better with treatment at home. Patients with more serious cases often need to be treated in the hospital. Rarely, surgery is needed. In the worst cases, it may even be deadly.

Having diarrhea many times a day can be disruptive and difficult to deal with.

**Contact your health care professional if you or someone in your care is having trouble with *C diff* diarrhea.**
How do you prevent the spread of \textit{C diff}?

**Handwashing and precautions**

- Make sure that you, your caregivers, and your family wash your hands often with soap and water.
  - People with \textit{C diff} diarrhea should be especially careful to wash their hands after using the bathroom and before eating.
  - **Hand sanitizers do not kill \textit{C diff} germs.**

- If possible, the person with \textit{C diff} diarrhea should:
  - Use a separate bathroom.
  - Not share eating utensils or prepare food for others.

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**Cleaning**

- Clean surfaces in the bathroom and kitchen with a bleach solution.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{Part} & \text{Bleach} \\
\hline
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
\hline
10 & \text{Water} \\
\hline
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
1 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

**Fight \textit{C diff} germs by washing your hands!**

1. Wet your hands
2. Apply soap
3. Lather and scrub—20 sec
4. Rinse—10 sec
5. Turn off tap
6. Dry your hands with a paper towel

**Clean surfaces that are touched often, such as:**

- Light switches
- Telephones
- Toilet handles and seats
- Doorknobs, handles, and remotes

**DON'T FORGET TO WASH:**
- between your fingers
- under your nails
- the tops of your hands
How is *C diff* treated?

**Medicines**

- There are certain medicines that are used to treat *C diff* diarrhea. These medicines can help fight *C diff* diarrhea and help it go away.

**Other treatment options: Probiotics and surgery**

- It is important that you drink lots of fluids while you have *C diff* diarrhea. Broths and watered-down fruit juice are good choices. If you can keep food down, choose starchy foods like potatoes, rice, oatmeal, and noodles.
- Your doctor may prescribe probiotics as part of your treatment. Probiotics may help bring back some of the healthy bacteria in your intestines.
- In rare cases, you may need surgery on your intestines.

Sample questions you may want to ask your doctor

- What medications have you prescribed for me?
- What are the possible side effects?
- For how long should I take the medication(s)?
- Can I take my other medication(s) while being treated for *C diff*?
- What should I do if I do not get better?
- What should I do if I get diarrhea again?

Notes

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Our Mission

Peggy Lillis Foundation is building a nationwide C
diff awareness movement by educating the public, empowering advocates, and shaping policy.

For more information, please visit www.peggyfoundation.org.

An educational brochure provided by the Peggy Lillis Foundation and Merck.