



East Sussex Healthcare
NHS Trust

Eastbourne District General Hospital

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FOI REF: 25/546

19th August 2025

Tel: 0300 131 4500
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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

1) What information material do you provide to patients diagnosed with C. difficile infection in your care?

- **If possible, please provide either the material or a link to this information, if available?**

Please see the attached 'CDI patient information leaflet' that is provided to patients that are going home.

We also refer patients to the leaflet on the NHS Website via the following link:

[Clostridioides difficile \(C. diff\) - NHS](#)

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, you have the right to request an internal review. Please write to the Freedom of Information Department (esh-tr.foi@nhs.net), quoting the above reference, within 40 working days. The Trust is not obliged to accept an internal review after this date.

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Should you still be dissatisfied with your FOI request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Department
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net

How should I wash my clothes and towels?

- Clothing, sheets, towels etc. used by the person with CDI should be washed separately and not mixed with other laundry.
- Wash the laundry at 60°C (or on the highest temperature that the material will withstand without damage).
- Clean the area around your washing machine (worktops and washing machine door with your usual kitchen cleaner) after laundering these items.
- Try not to rinse dirty laundry by hand - if you have to, wear disposable or rubber gloves, and place the laundry underwater so as to avoid splashing. After you have finished clean the sink with your usual kitchen cleaner and dispose of gloves (if rubber gloves have been used wash the outside with soap and water).
- If possible the laundry should be tumble dried, if this is not possible dry in the way you would normally. Iron using a hot steam iron.

How will I know when the infection has gone?

The diarrhoea usually stops and you have formed stools.

Can it come back?

Yes, the infection can recur. This is more common in the elderly and in people who have another illness. If your symptoms come back you should contact your GP as soon as possible for advice.

Where can I get more information?

This leaflet might not cover all the questions you have. If you would like further advice or more information contact:

- Your GP or Practice Nurse



Infection Control Team
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Clostridium *difficile* infection (CDI)

A guide for the general public - out of hospital.

This leaflet aims to give you an understanding of what is meant by Clostridium *difficile* infection or CDI

What is Clostridium *difficile*?

Clostridium *difficile* is a type of bacteria found in the gut of 3% of healthy people. Usually it is kept under control by other gut bacteria but sometimes it can cause mild to severe diarrhoea. Clostridium *difficile* can also form spores, which can survive for long periods in the environment on furniture, carpets and on unwashed hands.

What causes Clostridium difficile Infection (CDI)?

CDI may be caused by recent antibiotic treatment. This is because antibiotics can disturb the bacteria that normally live in the gut and protect us against infections such as CDI. When this happens Clostridium difficile bacteria can grow quickly causing diarrhoea and fever. The elderly and those vulnerable to infection due to underlying illness (such as cancer and kidney patients) are at increased risk.

How do I know if I am infected with CDI?

The symptoms of CDI include mild to severe diarrhoea, fever and stomach pains. Diagnosis can only be confirmed by sending a sample of your faeces to the laboratory for testing.

Can CDI be treated?

Yes. There are a number of treatments that may be considered:

- If you are taking antibiotics these will be reviewed by your doctor.
- Treatment with a specific antibiotic (it may take 5-7 days to have any effect at all on the diarrhoea).
- In some cases you may not need antibiotic treatment. Your GP will discuss this with you.
- **If you have diarrhoea, remember to drink lots of clear fluids to keep hydrated.**

How can I reduce the risk of spreading the infection at home?

- Wash your hands carefully with liquid soap and warm water **after** using the toilet and **before** eating.
- Dry your hands carefully – use a towel that no one else will use.
- Avoid preparing food for others.
- If you have diarrhoea, clean and disinfect the toilet bowl, toilet seat (including underside surface), toilet flush handle using bleach based disinfectant **after every** use.
- Do not share personal hygiene items such as towels, facecloths or toothbrushes with other people.
- You should stay away from work or school until you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours. You should tell your employer that you have had clostridium difficile infection if you work with vulnerable groups (e.g. the elderly, the very young), are a healthcare worker or if you are a food handler (either as part of, or your entire job).

Are my family and friends at risk?

CDI does not usually affect healthy people. However it is important that family and friends follow the simple points listed below to avoid infection:

- Wash hands carefully with liquid soap and warm water after using the toilet, before eating or preparing food and after cleaning toilets.
- Wash hands carefully with liquid soap and warm water after they help you.
- Dry hands carefully. Do not use the same towel as the person with CDI.
- Avoid contact with faeces. If contact is likely, disposable gloves should be worn.

Do I need to do any special cleaning?

- Clean and disinfect the toilet bowl, toilet seat (including underside surface), toilet flush handle using bleach based disinfectant at least daily and after each use by the person with CDI.
- Cleaning cloths can easily spread Clostridium difficile spores around the home. Disposable cloths should be used or cloths should be cleaned after each use by: washing in a washing machine at 60°C.
- Keep the immediate environment around the person with CDI clutter free and hygienically clean. The most important surfaces to clean are those that come into contact with hands e.g. door handles, telephone, light switches. To make surfaces hygienically clean you need to use bleach based disinfectant cleaner.
- Carpeted floors should be vacuumed daily. Hard floors especially in toilets/bathrooms should be washed with a bleach based disinfectant daily.

In a busy household it is not always possible to keep hand contact surfaces hygienically clean at all times. That is why it is so important to wash hands as often and as carefully as possible to break the chain of infection.

