

# Clostridioides difficile in Health Care:

Recognize the Risk and Stop the Spread

## What Is *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*)?

*C. diff* is a germ that causes severe diarrhea and inflammation of the colon. Most cases of *C. diff* infection occur during or soon after antibiotic use. *C. diff* spreads easily in hospitals and nursing homes and can lead to serious infections, especially in older adults and people with weakened immune systems.

## Recognize the Risk of *C. diff*

*C. diff* lives in stool and easily spreads to skin and surfaces, including:

- high-touch and frequently contaminated surfaces such as toilets, bedrails, call buttons, bed sheets, and doorknobs.
- shared equipment and devices such as electronic thermometers and blood pressure cuffs.



*C. diff* spreads through touch, including:

- touching contaminated surfaces or equipment.
- touching infected patients or their environment.

*C. diff* is very hard to kill and can survive on surfaces for months. Environmental cleaning requires using a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff* germs (see EPA's list K\*).

## Stop the Spread of *C. diff*



- Use a gown and gloves to keep *C. diff* germs from getting on you when touching the patient or items in their environment.



- Remove your gown and gloves before leaving the patient's room to avoid spreading *C. diff* germs.
- Always clean your hands after taking off your gloves to remove and kill germs.



- Clean and disinfect the patient's room and equipment daily with a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff*.
- Clean and disinfect shared medical equipment with a disinfectant that can kill *C. diff* prior to use with another patient.

Learn More

Preventing the Spread of *C. diff*: <https://bit.ly/4tfb9ya>

EPA's List K: <https://bit.ly/4sA6yGz>



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