

**Further information is available from;**

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

**Other Sources of Information**

**NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

**Self Help & Support Groups**

A selection of websites providing access to good quality patient and consumer health information, covering specific age groups and conditions. Also includes Shropshire Community Directory which contains up-to-date information on community groups, clubs, societies, organisations, support groups and self-help groups covering Shropshire and its borders.

Website: [www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/](http://www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/)

**Information in Other Formats**

Are there different versions of the leaflet available e.g. Large type face, different languages, print? size, tape?

**Website: [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)**

Information Produced by: Infection Prevention and Control Team

Date of Publication: August 2019

Due for Review on: August 2022

© SaTH NHS Trust

## Patient Information

# C difficile (Clostridioides difficile/ C diff)

### Who is at risk?

- Any patient in hospital is potentially at risk of infection
- The elderly (over 65 years of age) are more at risk
- Patients who have weaker immunity will be more at risk
- People taking antibiotics as these may alter the normal gut flora and increase the risk of developing C diff diarrhoea

### How is it spread?

A patient with C diff excretes large numbers of spores, which can live in the environment for a long time. Spores contaminate surfaces and equipment surrounding infected patients e.g. lockers, tables, commodes, bedpans. This can be a source of hand-to-mouth infections for other patients. The risk of infection increases when patients have diarrhoea and bathrooms and toilets are shared. It is spread by touch with the contaminated diarrhoea, with an affected patient with contact with the bacteria in the environment. C diff can be spread from person to person by poor hand hygiene.

At The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust we maintain a high standard of cleaning in order to prevent C diff infection. Antibiotic prescribing is also monitored to ensure that antibiotics are not prescribed unnecessarily.

Staff receive regular training to keep them up to date with the latest hand hygiene techniques and receive regular assessments of their hand washing techniques.

### What will happen to me if I am diagnosed as having C diff?

- You may be asked to move to a single room or designated ward. You may also be allocated a toilet or commode for your use. If you are placed in a sideroom we ask you not to have contact with other patients until advised by ward staff
- This will help prevent spread of the infection to other patients
- Staff will wear gloves and aprons if they are performing any personal care for you, as well as strict hand washing. This will help to prevent the spread of infection to other patients
- You must make sure you wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet and before meals
- The bedside alcohol hand gel is not effective against C diff

### How is it treated?

- If you have symptoms, such as diarrhoea, a course of antibiotics may be prescribed by your doctor. If the symptoms have already settled, no treatment is necessary
- Medicine to stop the diarrhoea is not required as this may cause additional irritation to your bowel

- Doctors and nurses will check that you are taking enough fluids

### Will any of my treatment be delayed?

- No, investigations and treatments will continue with staff taking the correct precautions
- Sometimes non-urgent investigations may be delayed if you are experiencing severe diarrhoea

### Can I have visitors?

- Yes, you can have visitors as healthy people are at little risk of getting C diff whilst visiting. However if visitors are unwell they should stay away until they are better (if in doubt, you should discuss this with the staff looking after you)
- Your visitors will not be required to wear gloves and apron unless they are helping with your personal care (such as washing and dressing). Washing their hands with soap and water when leaving the ward and following contact with your environment is all that is required

### Can my washing be sent home?

- Yes, laundry can still be taken home and washed as usual
- The laundry will be placed directly into a special bag that will dissolve in the washing machine, this will then be placed into a patient property carrier bag to make it easier to transport
- Wash soiled laundry on a separate cycle (60°C if the fabric will withstand the temperature)

### Can I go home with C diff?

- Yes as long as your doctors are satisfied that you are fit for discharge
- They will let you know if you need to continue treatment at home

### Can it come back?

- Yes it can – If you suffer a relapse of diarrhoea within 3 months of your discharge from hospital, please contact your GP immediately so that you can be assessed
- Ensuring that your GP is aware that you had been diagnosed as previously having C diff.