



Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Clostridium Difficile (C. Diff)

Self-Management Plan

<p>General Health Guidelines:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take medications only as prescribed by your healthcare provider • Use soap and water when washing your hands • Wear gloves when providing care to someone who has C. diff.
<p>Green Flags – All Clear </p>	
<p>What this means:</p> <p>If you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not take antibiotics regularly • Do not have diarrhea • Regularly wash your hands often with soap and water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You do not show symptoms of HAI or C. diff.
<p>Keep up the great work!</p>	
<p>Yellow Flags – Caution </p>	
<p>What this means:</p> <p>If you have <u>any</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three or more watery stools a day and symptoms lasting more than two days • A new fever • Mild to moderate abdominal pain or cramping and abdominal tenderness • Blood in your stool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You could have HAI or C. diff. <div style="background-color: #D3D3D3; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Call your doctor, nurse, or home health nurse if symptoms do not improve.</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Number:</p> <p>Instructions:</p> </div>
<p>If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.</p>	
<p>Red Flags—Stop and Think </p>	
<p>What this means:</p> <p>If you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery diarrhea 10–15 times a day • Severe abdominal cramping, pain, or a swollen abdomen • Fever • Blood or pus in your stool • Nausea or loss of appetite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicates you need to be seen by a physician right away. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Physician:</p> <p>Number:</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <p>In an emergency situation: Call 911</p> </div>
<p>If you notice a Red Flag, call your physician immediately.</p>	



Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Clostridium Difficile (C. Diff) C. diff Fast Facts

People getting medical care can get serious healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). One type of HAI is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium difficile* (C. diff).

C. diff bacteria are found in the environment—in soil, air, water, human and animal feces, and in food products, such as processed meats. People who are healthy may naturally carry the bacteria in their large intestine and not have ill effects from the bacteria. People with certain illnesses or conditions requiring antibiotics and the elderly are at greater risk of getting this germ.

C. diff is an important cause of infectious disease death in the U.S. According to a 2015 study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly half a million U.S. residents suffered from C. diff infection in a single year, and approximately 29,000 patients died within 30 days of initial C. diff diagnosis.

Symptoms of C. diff can be mild to severe. In a mild case, the most common symptoms include watery diarrhea and mild pain and/or tenderness in the abdominal area.

In severe cases of C. diff infection, signs and symptoms can include:

- Watery diarrhea 10–15 times a day
- Abdominal cramping and pain, which may be severe
- Fever
- Blood or pus in the stool
- Nausea
- Dehydration
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Swollen abdomen
- Kidney failure
- Increased white blood cell count

Clostridium difficile is pronounced:

Klo-STRID-ee-um

dif-uh-SEEL

It is also known as *C. diff*, pronounced:

See-diff

C. diff is passed when any surface or material (such as a toilet, bathing tub, or tubing) becomes contaminated with bacteria that is found in feces. People get the infection if they touch items or surfaces that are contaminated with feces and then touch their mouth or mucus membranes.

So, what can you do?

- Take antibiotics only as prescribed by your doctor and take all the medication, even if you start feeling better. Only stop taking a medication, including antibiotics, if your doctor tells you to do so.
- Avoid unnecessary use of antibiotics.
- Tell your doctor if you have been on antibiotics and/or start to have diarrhea within a few months after taking the antibiotic.
- Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Try to use a separate bathroom if you have diarrhea.
- Keep the bathroom cleaned well if you share the bathroom with someone who has diarrhea.

Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington

At the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities, we believe every adult deserves to live with dignity. We connect seniors, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to a full range of free and other community resources designed to offer you choice, improve your quality of life and respect your independence.

For more information, call Information and Assistance

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Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties: 360-577-4929—iakelso@dshs.wa.gov

Klickitat County: Goldendale: 509-773-3757 White Salmon: 509-493-3068—kcinfo@klickitatcounty.org

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