

Patient information

What is Clostridium *difficile*?

Clostridium *difficile* are bacteria that live in the bowel, usually causing no harm at all. Unfortunately some antibiotics and other medications given to treat infections can allow these bacteria to multiply, causing symptoms of abdominal pain, diarrhoea and occasionally vomiting. Symptoms may be mild and clear up after a few days without any treatment, however, if the symptoms persist or worsen the doctors will prescribe a special antibiotic treatment. If you have unexplained diarrhoea, the nurses will take a stool specimen to identify if Clostridium *difficile* is causing your symptoms.

Do I need to be isolated?

If the diarrhoea is severe, there is a risk that the infection can be spread to other patients, so you will need to be admitted to either an isolation ward or transferred to a side room. Staff will wear aprons and gloves when caring for you and be strict with hand washing.

How long will I have to stay in isolation?

As long as the treatment is working and you have been passing formed stools for at least three days, the risk of infection is reduced and we can consider moving you out of isolation. The doctors and nurses and the infection prevention team will monitor your condition closely.

What is the treatment?

Sometimes, simply stopping or changing the type of antibiotics you are taking will be all that is needed. If this is not possible, a short course of special antibiotics will be prescribed. Usually, after a few days, you will be feeling much better, but in some cases a second course of antibiotics may be necessary. In the unlikely event that you do not respond to this treatment, a different antibiotic will be prescribed.

What can I do to help myself and protect others?

- Ensure that you wash your hands well with soap and water after using the toilet and before meals.
- Do not sit on other patient's beds and avoid sharing things such as toiletries or food.
- Change your clothing once soiled.
- Bedding will be changed daily or whenever necessary.
- Although you may not feel like it, do try to eat and drink as much as possible.
- If you have any worries please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff or the infection prevention team. Everything will be treated with the strictest confidence.
- West Suffolk Hospital takes all cases of *Clostridium difficile* very seriously and regrets that any case occurs. All cases of *Clostridium difficile* infection are investigated by a team of doctors, nurses and infection prevention specialists; this is to see if the infection could have been avoided. If you would like to discuss the results of this investigation (which can take place sometime after the infection) with a member of staff, then please let your ward manager know. If you would like a written report of the investigation, please let the staff know and this will be given/sent to you.

Visiting

Immediate family only and two visitors per patient please.

Children under the age of 12 may visit following discussion with the nurse in charge.

Visitors are asked to wash their hands with soap and water on entry and exit to the unit/side room.

If visitors are assisting with personal care, gloves and aprons will be provided.

Please do not bring any flowers or perishable food products

Visiting arrangements for the Isolation Unit are restricted to:

2:30pm - 3:30pm

7:00pm - 8:00pm

Please note that on other wards visiting times may vary. Please see individual ward for advice.

Additional information

You can find additional information regarding C. *difficile* on the following websites:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Clostridium-difficile/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Public Health England

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/339322/Clostridium_difficile_fact_sheet.pdf

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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