

# C. DIFF FACTSHEET

*Clostridioides difficile* (formerly known as *Clostridium difficile*) is a bacterium that causes diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon). *C. diff* infections can be deadly.

## IMPACT



*C. diff* causes close to half a million illnesses each year and can affect people of all ages.<sup>1</sup>



1 in 5 patients will get *C. diff* at least once more.<sup>1</sup>



One in 11 people over 65 diagnosed with a healthcare-associated *C. diff* infection die within a month.<sup>1</sup>

## RISK



People on antibiotics are 7 to 10 times more likely to get *C. diff* while on the drugs and during the month after.<sup>2</sup>



Extended stays in healthcare settings, especially hospitals and nursing homes, also increase risk.



More than 80% of *C. diff* deaths occur in people 65 and older.

## SPREAD



*C. diff* spreads when people touch surfaces that are contaminated with poop from an infected person.



Or when people don't wash their hands with soap and water.



It can also happen when one healthcare facility fails to notify another when it transfers a patient with *C. diff*.

## Healthcare professionals can help PREVENT *C. diff* by:



Improving the way they prescribe antibiotics.



Using the tests that give the most accurate results.



Rapidly identifying and isolating patients with *C. diff*.



Wearing gloves and gowns when treating patients with *C. diff*—and remembering that hand sanitizer doesn't kill *C. diff*.



Cleaning surfaces in rooms where *C. diff* patients are treated with EPA-approved, spore-killing disinfectant (see List K).

[cdc.gov/cdiff](http://cdc.gov/cdiff)

<sup>1</sup> Table 3 from Lessa FC, Mu Yi, Bamberg WM et al. N Engl J Med 2015;372:825-34. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1408913

<sup>2</sup> Hensgens MPM, Goorhuis A, Dekkers OM, Kuijper EJ. J Antimicrob Chemother 2011. DOI: 10.1093/jac/dkr508



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