

I've been told I have *Clostridium difficile*

ISLHD Infection Management and Control Service

What is *Clostridium difficile*?

Clostridium difficile (*C. difficile*) is a bacteria that can live in the bowel without causing any harm. Sometimes this bacteria can cause diarrhoea. This can occur when you have been taking antibiotics or medicines that change your stomach acid.

What happens now?

When you are in hospital it is important that staff do not spread this bacteria to other patients

- Staff will clean their hands before and after touching you.
- They will wear an apron.
- You might be moved to a single room if one is available.
- We will ask you to clean your hands often using soap and water. Especially after using the toilet, before leaving your room and when returning to your room.
- You can continue to have visitors and have as much contact with them as you like eg: hug and kiss your children. *C. difficile* will not be a problem to healthy people.
- Please only use your own toilet when in hospital, rather than one that is shared with other people.
- When you have not had any diarrhoea for two or more days these special precautions will stop.

When you are at home

- You do not need to do anything special or different.
- You can share things like plates, cups, sheets and towels as normal.
- You can continue to visit and be visited by friends and family.
- You are free to go wherever you want to go.

Who do I tell?

Your doctor.

The hospital when you are being admitted, if you have diarrhoea.

The community nurse if you have one, if you have diarrhoea.

What do I do if the diarrhoea doesn't get better?

Sometimes diarrhoea continues after you go home. Sometimes it goes away, and then comes back.

If these things happen you should see your GP so that you can be checked to see if the *Clostridium difficile* is still there.

ISLHD Infection Management and Control Service can be contacted by phone on **02 4222 5898** or emailed on IMACS@health.nsw.gov.au if you need more information about *Clostridium difficile*.

The Health Care Interpreter Service provides a free and confidential interpreting service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For bookings please call **Phone: 4223 8540**.

If you need an interpreter please tell your service provider immediately and they can book one for you in your preferred language.