

5 Things Every Healthcare Worker Should Know about CDI



1 ***Clostridium difficile* is a highly contagious bacteria that is reaching epidemic proportions.**

Clostridium difficile is a spore-forming bacillus that produces exotoxins. These spores are known to exist in the environment for months! *Clostridium difficile* infection (CDI) is deadly, and is **one of the most common healthcare-associated infections** (HAIs) in the U.S. The two main modifiable risk factors are through the use of antibiotics and contamination with the *Clostridium difficile* spore in the environment and on your hands.

2 **Early identification of patients with CDI can help reduce the spread of infection.**

Knowing the main clinical symptoms and risk factors for CDI can help ensure early identification. Placing patients in Enteric Precautions/Contact Isolation when CDI is suspected will help control the spread of *Clostridium difficile* spores.

Main clinical symptoms:

- Watery diarrhea
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain/tenderness

Risk factors:

- Recent antibiotic use
- Recent admission to a healthcare facility
- Advanced age
- Immunocompromising conditions

3 **Overuse of antibiotics can lead to CDI – use with caution!**

Taking antibiotics can put patients at risk for developing CDI. Following these three rights and having an Antibiotic Stewardship program helps to reduce the incidence of CDI.

- Right Antibiotic
- Right Dose
- Right Duration

4 ***Clostridium difficile* spores are most commonly spread on the hands of healthcare workers.**

The single most important thing that you can do for your patients and yourself is to wash your hands! Washing your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using soap and water is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of CDI. Remember: alcohol-based hand rubs are **not** effective on *Clostridium difficile* spores, so only use soap and water when you are caring for patients with CDI/Enteric Precautions. Be sure to always observe the World Health Organization (WHO) [5 Moments for Hand Hygiene](#).

5 **High-touch cleaning daily will prevent the spread of *Clostridium difficile* spores.**

Cleaning “[high-touch](#)” surfaces with bleach/EPA approved sporicidal is an important tactic to reduce *Clostridium difficile* spores and prevent the spread of CDI in the healthcare environment. Remember to always observe the recommended “Dwell Time”/Wet Time based on manufacturer recommendations to ensure efficacy of cleaning agents.

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