



For Staff Education

# C. difficile

## What is it?

- A Gram positive, spore forming anaerobic bacillus bacteria that can cause diarrhea
- Colonizes up to 3-5% of adult humans without causing symptoms
- Certain strains can produce toxins—it is the toxins that actually cause symptoms

## How is it spread?

- By the fecal-oral route\*
  - Direct contact with an infected person or indirectly by contact with their soiled environment
- \* Eating with hands that are soiled with C.difficile allows it to enter your gut

## Where is it found?

- In the gastrointestinal tract or stool of infected persons
- Can live in the environment in spore form for months

## Prevention and control

- Use contact precautions (in addition to routine practices) when caring for someone with new or worsening diarrheal illness
- Provide a private room with dedicated toileting facilities
- Clean hands well and often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Use gloves and gown when entering patients room in acute care or when providing direct care of residents in long-term care (must be discarded before leaving the room)
- Dedicate patient/resident equipment or clean and disinfect equipment after each patient/resident use
- Ensure twice daily cleaning and disinfection of all touched surfaces in the room
- Tell the receiving department and staff involved in transport the infection control precautions in use
- Ensure appropriate terminal cleaning of the room after discharge
- Establish a process for management of antibiotic use, including regular review of antibiotic utilization
- Discontinue precautions only at the direction of the infection control team