

Infection Control Pathogen Primer:

Clostridium Difficile

What is Clostridium Difficile? Clostridium Difficile (C. Diff.) is a bacterium that causes colitis, or inflammation of the colon.

How do you get sick from C. Diff? C. Diff. bacteria are found in feces. People become infected if they touch items or surfaces contaminated with feces and then touch their mouth or mucous membranes. Healthcare workers can also spread the bacteria through their hands to other patients or onto surfaces.

Information about C. Diff.:

- Everyone naturally has C. Diff. bacteria living in their colon, but they are suppressed by other bacteria present in the colon
- C. Diff. typically lives in a dormant spore form, meaning it can live for very long periods on surfaces
- Symptoms of C. Diff. infection include: watery diarrhea, fever, nausea, and abdominal pain
- C. Diff. is generally treated with 10 days of special antibiotics

Other Information: Because of its unique ability to live in a dormant spore form, C. Diff. is one of the most difficult bacteria to get rid of. Use of certain antibiotics or overuse of antibiotics can kill other bacteria present in the colon, leaving the natural C. Diff. unchecked, leading to C. Diff. infection.

Infection Control Strategies: C. Diff. is very difficult to kill, and is resistant to many types of disinfectants. The CDC has released a recommended procedure for infection control against C. Diff. This specialized procedure involves a two-step process: first, general cleaning and disinfection using a quat-based disinfectant, followed by a second step using a bleach solution which is effective against C. Diff. spores. It is important to institute contact precautions in cases of C. Diff., and use this specialized infection control procedure only in C. Diff. isolated areas. Use a general infection control strategy in areas not affected by C. Diff. The CDC has also recommended general precautions to use to protect against C. Diff. outbreaks. More info on the [CDC C. Diff. Website](#).

Multi-Clean Disinfectants: EPA-registered bleach is a common disinfectant proven to be effective against C. Diff. spores. However, any of Multi-Clean's disinfectants can be used effectively in the first (quat-based) step of the recommended CDC procedure. Be sure to use a bleach product that is EPA-registered to eliminate C. Diff. spores.

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Century Q 256

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