

# THE PROGRESSION OF A *C. DIFF* INFECTION



*C. diff* is a bacterium (germ) that causes severe diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon). *C. diff* infections can be life-threatening.

***C. diff* can infect anyone. Most cases of *C. diff* infection occur while you're taking antibiotics or not long after you've finished taking antibiotics.**

**Other risk factors include:**

- Previous infection with *C. diff* or known exposure to the germs
- Being 65 or older
- Recent stay at a hospital or nursing home
- A weakened immune system, such as people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or organ transplant patients taking immunosuppressive drugs

**If you have signs or symptoms, see a doctor.**

- The doctor will review your signs and symptoms and order a lab test.
- If it's positive, you'll take an antibiotic for 10 days.

**After you've recovered, you could still be colonized.**

- The germs will be in your body, but you won't feel sick. So you won't need treatment.
- But you can still spread it to others, so always practice good hand hygiene.
- Tell all of your healthcare providers that you've had *C. diff*.

**Some people get *C. diff* over and over again.**

- For those with repeat infections, fecal microbiota transplants have shown promising results.

***C. diff* develops within a few days or up to several weeks after you take antibiotics and symptoms can include:**

- Severe Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach tenderness or pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea

**You might be admitted to the hospital.**

- Your healthcare providers will use precautions such as wearing gloves and gowns to prevent the spread of *C. diff*.

**About 1 in 6 people who get *C. diff* infection will get it again in the subsequent 2-8 weeks.**

- If you have symptoms again, see your doctor.



***C. diff* is contagious, but you can keep others from getting it.**

- Wash your hands with soap and water every time you use the bathroom and always before you eat.
- Try to use a separate bathroom if you have diarrhea.
- Take showers and use soap.

[cdc.gov/cdiff](https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention