You are being provided with this fact sheet:

☐ because you or your child may have been exposed to Clostridium difficile (C. difficile). If you believe your child has developed C. difficile, contact your health care provider. Notify your child care provider or preschool if a diagnosis of C. difficile is made.

☐ for informational purposes only.

What is C. difficile diarrhea?
Clostridium difficile (also called C. difficile or “C diff”) is a type of bacteria that can cause diarrheal disease. Most infections occur after antibiotic use. It is most commonly found in older adults who are patients in hospitals or live in long term care facilities. Healthy people usually do not become ill. Many infants and very young children can carry C. difficile with no symptoms or complications.

What are the symptoms of C. difficile diarrhea?
Watery diarrhea and fever are the most common symptoms. Loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal pain may also occur.

How is C. difficile diarrhea spread?
Touching objects contaminated with the stool of an infected person and then touching the mouth or food may also spread C. difficile. Spores can remain on surfaces for long periods of time and spread illness.

How is C. difficile diagnosed and treated?
A health care provider can make a diagnosis of C. difficile. To diagnose this disease, stool should be tested for the presence of C. difficile toxins after other causes of diarrhea have been ruled out. A health care provider will determine the best treatment for C. difficile.

How do you control the spread?
Thorough hand washing, proper handling of contaminated waste (including diapers), proper disinfection of contaminated surfaces, and limiting the use of unnecessary antibiotics are the best methods for control of C. difficile disease. Note that C. difficile requires a higher strength disinfectant than is normally used. You can contact your local health department for information on how to disinfect for C-diff. If you are in Snohomish County, contact the Snohomish Health District Child Care Health Outreach Program at 425-252-5415. Hand sanitizer is less effective against C. difficile and should not be used.

Exclude from group setting?
Yes. Children with C. difficile infections should be excluded from child care until the diarrhea is resolved.

References:
- American Academy of Pediatrics
  - Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 4th ed.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Website)

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