

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 recent 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?

Usually the infection is mild and causes: Watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps and fever are the most common symptoms. Loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal pain may also occur. In children younger than 5 years old, no symptoms may 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)

- [Clostridium difficile Infection](#). Accessed December 2020.

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Child Care Health Outreach Program

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