

# Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

## C-difficile Hot Topics

The bacteria in our intestines can get out of balance. It creates a situation where certain types of bacteria grow out of control and cause illness. C-difficile or “C-diff” is one of those bacteria.

*Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician. This is general information, not to be used or construed as medical advice or a substitution for medical care.*

### Signs & Symptoms of “C-Diff”

- Watery diarrhea, cramping, and abdominal tenderness
- Fever
- Loss of appetite and/or nausea
- Signs of dehydration - dry mouth, weakness, decreased urination, dark & smelly urine

### Causes of “C-Diff” Overgrowth & Associated Illness:

- Recently or currently taking antibiotics
- Members who are older or fragile are up to ten times more likely to get it
- Recent or current hospitalization; especially longer admissions
- Live in a long-term care facility or other institutionalized setting
- Weakened immune system from cancer treatment (chemotherapy) or other medical condition that affects immunity
- Recent abdominal surgery or gastrointestinal procedure
- History of previous “C-diff” infection

### Prevention:

- Wash hands often - especially before and after using the bathroom or providing personal care to others
- Launder and use a dryer for soiled clothing and linens at the highest recommended temperature
- Disinfect surfaces and other items using ten parts water to one part bleach solution; change solution every twenty-four (24) hours. You can also use a commercial disinfectant product.

### Action Items:

- Institute handwashing reminders/monitoring
- Monitor “at risk” members for symptoms - especially those taking antibiotics
- Call the health care provider for an appointment when symptoms are noted
- Access Urgent Care and/or the Emergency Department if after hours or symptoms are severe
  - Three or more loose, watery stools in one day
  - The member cannot keep liquids down and/or has symptoms of dehydration
- Make a follow-up appointment with the Member’s Primary Care Physician after Urgent Care or Emergency Department visit and/or a hospital admission/observation
- Notify the Member’s Primary Care Physician if there is no improvement or worsening symptoms

### Emergency:

*Call 9-1-1 immediately for shortness of breath, loss of consciousness, new confusion, bleeding, inability to move, and/or excessive pain.*

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