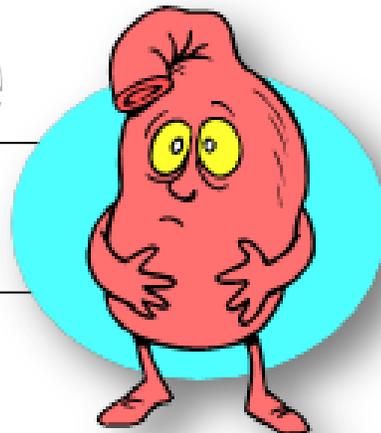


HOT TOPICS: C-difficile

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.



SIGNS AND 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 and associated illness:

- Recently or now taking antibiotics
- Individuals who are older or fragile are up to ten (10) 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 dryer for soiled clothing and linens at highest recommended temperature
- Disinfect surfaces and other items using a ten (10) parts water to one (1) part bleach solution; change solution every twenty-four (24) hours. You can also use a commercial disinfectant product.

ACTION ITEMS:

- ❖ Institute hand washing reminders/monitoring
- ❖ Monitor “at risk” individuals for symptoms – especially those taking antibiotics
- ❖ Call doctor for an appointment when symptoms are noted
- ❖ Access Urgent Care and/or ER if after hours or symptoms are severe
 - Three (3) or more loose watery stools in one day
 - Person cannot keep liquids down and/or has symptoms of dehydration
- ❖ Make a follow-up appointment with the individual’s regular doctor or PCP after Urgent Care or ER visit and/or a hospital admission/observation
- ❖ Notify regular doctor or PCP if there is no improvement or worsening of symptoms

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

Source: AHRQ (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) Publication No. 12-0082-EF • September 2012

This is general information not to be used or construed as medical advice or as a substitute for medical care.
DDD Quality Assurance Unit • 602-771-8122 • February 2013