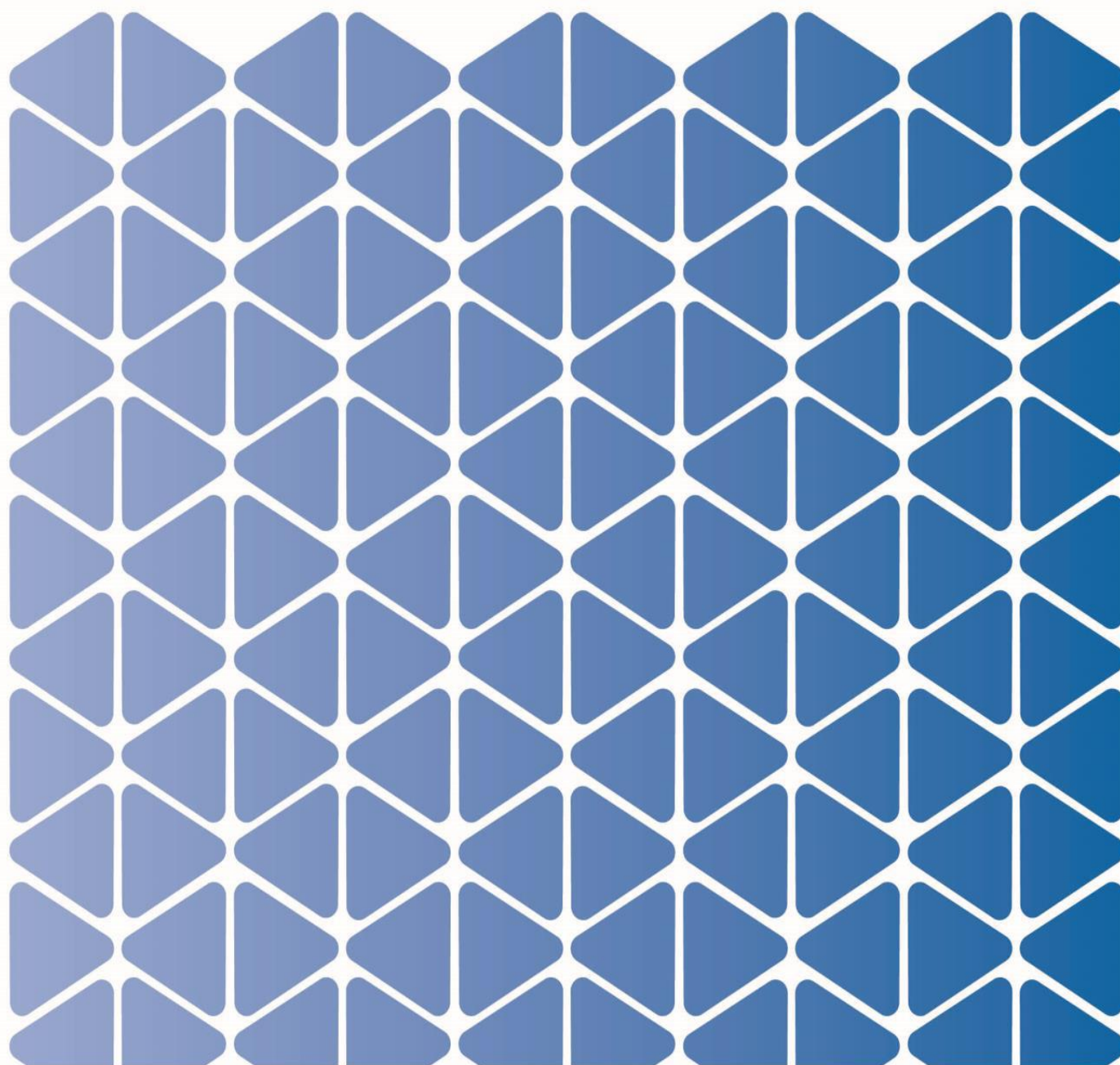


PATIENT INFORMATION**CLOSTRIDIODES DIFFICILE (C. diff)**
In Your Own Home

What is Clostridioides difficile infection?

Clostridioides difficile (C. diff) is a type of bacteria that can live naturally in some people's bowels. When a person is healthy, they have millions of good/beneficial bacteria in their bowel for some this can include C.diff. The "good" bacteria keep the C. diff bacteria under control.

If the bowel's "good" bacteria are removed, C. diff bacteria can multiply out of control giving some people diarrhoea.

The "good" bacteria in the bowel can be removed/reduced/changed by antibiotics, surgery or taking certain types of medication.

What symptoms does C. diff cause?

Common symptoms of a C. diff infection include:

- Diarrhoea, ranging from mild diarrhoea to frequent watery stools,
- a high temperature,
- loss of appetite,
- feeling sick,
- abdominal pain.
- Occasionally blood may be seen in stools.

Some people may develop a more serious bowel infection or complications and may need admitting to hospital.

What treatment do I require?

Following advice from the GP or health professional, any antibiotics you are taking may be stopped.

Symptoms may subside without further treatment, but you might be given an antibiotic specifically to treat the C. diff infection.

It is important that you take these new antibiotics until you have finished all the treatment as prescribed, even if you feel better. If you stop the treatment early, the symptoms could come back.

It is best not to self-medicate with any anti-diarrhoeal medication such as Loperamide because it can prevent the infection being cleared from your body, please seek further advice from your GP or healthcare team if required.

Do I need to tell my GP or other healthcare professionals?

Please ensure you tell any carers and health professionals you will be seeing before they arrive at your home or before you plan to go to them.

What should I do if I continue to get worse or there is no improvement?

Symptoms should improve a few days after starting the new course of antibiotics, but it may be 1 to 2 weeks before the infection clears up completely.

The infection can usually be treated at home however, some people may need to go into hospital. This is because C. diff infections can sometimes lead to more serious problems.

- Seek advice from the GP or healthcare team if:
- You have bloody diarrhoea, bleeding from your bottom or continue to have had diarrhoea for more than 7 days without improvement.
- Your symptoms get worse, you feel very unwell after starting the new antibiotics, or the symptoms don't resolve.
- You start to develop a fever (high temperature).
- You have worsening abdominal pain and/or bloating/swelling.
- You have increasing number of diarrhoea episodes with signs of dehydration (such as new/worsening confusion, dry lips and mouth, poor urine output).

When am I no longer infectious?

You are classed as no longer infectious, 48 hours after your first formed stool.

There is no need to send a specimen to the GP to ensure the infection has gone.

Can Clostridioides difficile Infection come back?

Yes

C. diff infection can return. If your diarrhoea is ongoing at the end of your treatment or if diarrhoea returns, you should contact your healthcare team as a further course of treatment may be needed.

How do I care for myself?

Personal hygiene is important including hand washing.

Wash regularly with soap and water, (hand gels are not effective against C diff). Especially washing hands before eating and drinking and after using the toilet to remove any C. diff germs you could be carrying on your body.

Try and stay at home until at least 48 hours after your diarrhoea stops.

Do not share towels and flannels and change these daily where possible.

Can I eat and drink as normal?

Yes

- Nutrition and hydration are important.
- You need to avoid dehydration by making sure you drink plenty of fluids.
- Remember to have plenty of non-alcoholic drinks and other fluids such as soup or ice lollies.
- A healthy diet will support the bowel to re-populate with beneficial bacteria.

Do I need my own crockery and cutlery?

No, but:

- All crockery and cutlery should be washed after each use.
- Remember, hand washing must be performed before preparing or having meals, and after using the toilet.

What cleaning is required while I have diarrhoea?

If you are at home

- Toilets/commodes and areas around these require regular cleaning. Ideally, they should be cleaned with detergent and water, then disinfected with bleach.
- Cleaning should include items that are touched frequently such as:
 - Door handles and light switches,
 - Fridge and kettle handles,
 - Flush toilet handles.
- Electronics, such as phones or tablets should be frequently wiped with an appropriate cleaning product, in line with the product manual.

If you are in a care home or hospital, the teams responsible for your care will be able to facilitate the appropriate cleaning.

How do I do my washing?

- Clothing should be changed daily where possible.
- Clothing should be washed, in a washing machine where possible, at the highest temperature the fabric allows.
- Wash contaminated clothes and sheets separately from other washing.
- Avoid soaking clothes or washing by hand where possible.
- Always wash hands, with soap and water, after contact with soiled clothing or bedding.

What about my friends and family and those within my household?

C. diff infection can spread when the bacteria from the bowel get onto other surfaces or objects and transfer to other people through ingestion.

It is not a risk to healthy people, however if your people are concerned or feel they may be at risk they should ask their healthcare professional for advice.

- You can continue with your usual sleeping arrangements, there is no risk to friends/family with social contact such as hugging, shaking hands etc.
- Visitors must wash their hands on leaving your home and after any care they give you.
- Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread from person to person.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.