

**Frequent hand hygiene
(hand washing) is the
single most effective
way of preventing
the transmission of
infections.**



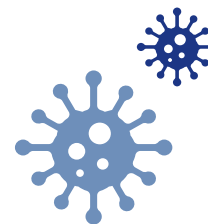
Calvary John James Hospital
acknowledges the Infection Control &
Staff Health Department of Calvary Public
Hospital Bruce, who assisted with the
development of this brochure.



Public Hospital Bruce



Consumer Endorsed
Patient Information Publication



Enquiries

Should you have any further questions
please ask your hospital doctor or GP, or
contact our Infection Control Coordinator
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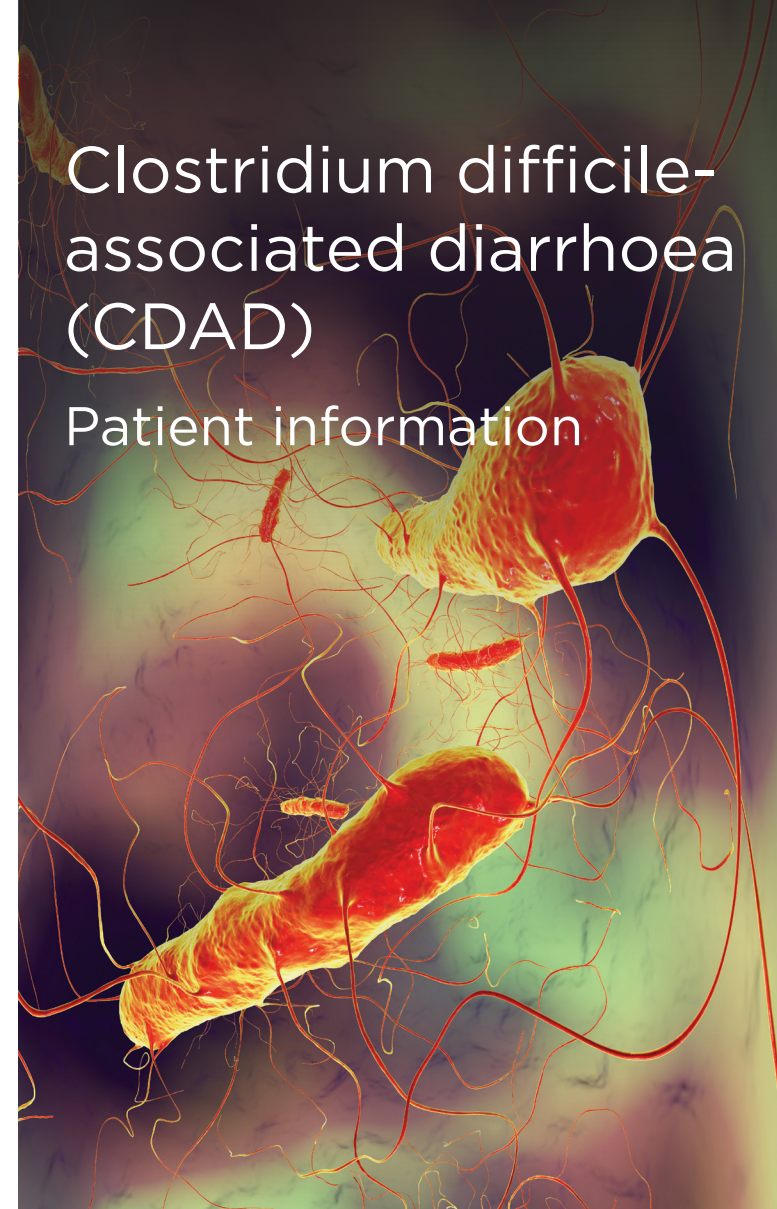
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Clostridium difficile- associated diarrhoea (CDAD)

Patient information



Calvary

John James Hospital

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary

What is Clostridium difficile?

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacteria that can live on the skin. Over time some of these bacteria have become resistant to antibiotics. This means the bacteria are no longer killed by regular antibiotics. These resistant bacteria are called MRSA. MRSA is often incorrectly referred to as 'Golden Staph', this term covers all types of staphylococcus aureus. There are a number of different types of MRSA. Some are acquired from the community and others are healthcare related.

How do you get Clostridium difficile-associated diarrhoea (CDAD)?

When taking antibiotics, the levels of good bacteria in your bowel can be altered. When good bowel bacteria are affected by antibiotics, C. difficile can grow and produce toxins that cause CDAD.

Touching surfaces contaminated with C. difficile and then touching your mouth can result in C. difficile infection.

C. difficile bacteria can be spread by anybody, including health care workers, if they have not performed hand hygiene adequately.

What are the symptoms of CDAD?

- watery diarrhoea
- fever
- loss of appetite
- nausea
- abdominal pain and tenderness

Is C. difficile harmful?

C. difficile is not a health risk for healthy people, however patients with other health concerns e.g. the elderly, those who have other health issues or who are taking antibiotics are at greater risk of infection.

It is possible for patients to have C. difficile bacteria present in their bowel and still be asymptomatic (i.e. show no symptoms). C. difficile can cause complications including pseudo-membranous colitis.

How is CDAD diagnosed?

A sample of faeces from a patient with diarrhoea is forwarded to the laboratory for testing. The laboratory is checking for toxin-producing C. difficile bacteria. If C. difficile toxins are found, you will be diagnosed as having CDAD.

How can C. difficile spread be prevented?

C. difficile can be reduced in health care settings by the careful use of antibiotics and good Infection Control practices.

Performing hand hygiene with soap and water (this particular bacterium is resistant to alcohol-based hand sanitiser) is an effective way of preventing the transmission of health care-associated infections including C. difficile.

Performing hand hygiene includes but is not limited to:

- before and after any physical contact
- after contact with surfaces in patients' rooms such as furniture
- after using the toilet
- before handling food and eating
- whenever your hands are visibly soiled

Gloves and gowns should be used by staff when caring for patients with C. difficile infection, including when in contact with the patient's environment and changed between patients. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after glove use.

What will happen while you are admitted to hospital?

You will be in a single room or in a shared room with another CDAD patient. Staff will be required to wear a long-sleeved gown and gloves when caring for you to reduce the risk of spreading CDAD to other patients on the ward.

You will have antibiotics prescribed for you by your doctor if you have CDAD.

It is important that you remain in your room to reduce the risk of spreading the C. difficile bacteria. If you do need to leave your room, you will need to perform hand hygiene prior to leaving.

You must not visit other patients in your ward or around the hospital.

If you need to be transferred within the hospital, the nursing staff will ensure that you are wearing the appropriate attire and inform the other departments to ensure appropriate care is taken to reduce the risk of the spread of C. difficile bacteria.

Upon transfer if staff caring for you are not wearing gowns and gloves, please advise them that you have been diagnosed with CDAD and that they should be taking the appropriate precautions.

Once you have been started on the antibiotic treatment for CDAD and your diarrhoea has ceased for at least 48 hours, the isolation precautions may be ceased; the nursing staff caring for you will advise you when this will occur.

What happens when I go home?

You do not need to do anything extra at home. Good levels of general personal and household hygiene, including hand hygiene, are important to reduce the risk of spreading CDAD to others.

Eating utensils and dishes may be washed as normal.

You can return to work when your doctor is happy for you to do so. If you are a health care worker, please supply a medical certificate signed by your doctor upon your return, clearing you to resume your normal duties.

If you have to visit your hospital doctor, GP or another health care facility, please advise them that you have had CDAD.