

Can I have visitors?

Yes, you can have visitors as healthy people are at very little risk of getting Clostridium difficile or CDAD whilst visiting.

Your visitors will be asked to report to the nurse-in-charge before visiting and to wash their hands as they come and go.

Your visitors will be asked to comply with the hospital visiting policy (a maximum of two visitors per bed, no sitting on beds, visiting times between 2pm and 7.30pm).

We need to be able to clean very thoroughly around your bed, therefore we ask you to keep belongings to a minimum.

We ask that no food or fruit bowls are left out near your bed, as these may become contaminated with the Clostridium difficile.

Visitors will not be allowed to drink or eat food on the ward.

Can my washing be sent home?

Yes, laundry can go home and be washed as usual at the highest temperature the item can tolerate (60°C or above is preferable). Soiled laundry should be washed separately.

If you are wearing your own clothes, these should be changed every day and the used clothes sent home daily.

Hospital nightwear or gowns are available for you to wear.

Can I go home with Clostridium difficile (or CDAD)?

You will normally wait for the diarrhoea to settle and your medical team to be satisfied that you are fit for discharge. They will let you know if you need to continue treatment after you are discharged from hospital.

Can Clostridium difficile (or CDAD) come back?

Yes, some patients may suffer a relapse of diarrhoea. Please contact your GP if you develop diarrhoea again when you are discharged from hospital.

How can I help prevent Clostridium difficile?

You can help stop the spread of Clostridium difficile by making sure you always wash your hands with soap and water on entering and leaving] hospital wards (and using the alcohol gel, which kills the MRSA bacteria). Hand hygiene is one of the most important weapons in the battle against hospital acquired infection.

Where can I get more information?

Your nurses and doctors can answer any questions, or can contact a member of the infection control team if you would like to discuss anything further.

You can also find information on the following websites: www.hpa.org.uk and www.dh.gov.uk

Clostridium difficile (C-diff)

A guide for patients and visitors



This leaflet contains information on Clostridium difficile, a hospital acquired infection we are working hard to prevent here at Bedford Hospital. Please read on to find out more about Clostridium difficile and how you can help reduce infection.

Clostridium difficile Associated Disease (CDAD)

What is Clostridium difficile?

Clostridium difficile (sometimes referred to as C-diff) is a type of bacterium that is present in the gut of up to three percent of healthy adults and 66 per cent of infants.

It rarely causes problems in children or healthy adults as the normal bacterial population of the intestine keeps it under control.

What type of illness can it cause?

The effects of Clostridium difficile can vary from nothing to diarrhoea of varying severity and, much more unusually, to severe inflammation of the bowel.

Other symptoms can include fever, loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal pain or tenderness.

How do you catch it?

Clostridium difficile can cause illness when certain antibiotics disturb the balance of 'normal' bacteria in the gut.

It is possible for the infection to spread from person to person because those suffering from Clostridium difficile associated disease shed the organism and spores in their stool; the spores can then live in the environment.

The organism can be spread hand-to-mouth and affect vulnerable patients.

Who is most at risk of getting Clostridium difficile?

Patients over 65 years of age, with underlying illness, and those who have recently taken antibiotics are at most risk of developing illness.

Younger patients with underlying illness can also be affected.

What will happen to me if I get Clostridium difficile Associate Disease (CDAD)?

You may be asked to move either into a room on your own, or onto a designated ward or area.

You must make sure that you wash your hands well before eating or drinking and after you have used the lavatory.

Please keep your fingernails short and clean. Hygiene is very important in treating CDAD; you will be offered regular showers and should change your clothes every day.

Staff will wear aprons and gloves when looking after you, and wash their hands before and after giving you care. This helps to prevent the spread of infection to other vulnerable patients.

We are happy for you to remind us to clean our hands if we forget.

How is Clostridium difficile (or CDAD) treated?

In about 15 per cent of patients stopping any antibiotics will resolve the symptoms.

In others a special course of antibiotics that kill Clostridium difficile may be prescribed by your medical team and this should settle the diarrhoea.

The medical team will make sure you are taking adequate fluids.

It is important that you are eating well. If you are losing weight or eating only half portions at meal times or missing meals, then speak to the nursing staff.

You may need to see the dietician who can assess how much you require and give you additional nutrition from extra snacks or special nutritional drinks. This will help you fight the infection.

Will any of my treatment or my operation be delayed?

No, investigations and treatments will continue with staff taking the correct precautions.

Sometimes we may have to delay non-urgent investigations if you are experiencing severe diarrhoea.