

C-Difficile – Important Facts

What is C-difficile?

C-difficile is one of the many types of bacteria that can be found in feces and has been known as a cause of health care associated diarrhea for about 30 years.

What causes C-difficile?

C-difficile is not new and it doesn't come from hospitals. It is found in the intestine, occurring naturally in 3 – 5% of adults without causing symptoms. It can be picked up on the hands from exposure in the environment and can get into the stomach once the mouth is touched or if food is handled and then swallowed. The use of antibiotics also increases the chance of developing C-difficile as it alters the normal level of good bacteria found in the intestines and colon.

How does C-difficile Spread?

When a person has C-difficile the bacteria in their feces can contaminate surfaces such as toilets, bedpans, commode chairs, door handles etc. Other healthy individuals can contaminate their hands if they touch these items. If these individuals then touch their mouths, they can become infected. The spread of C-difficile occurs due to inadequate hand hygiene and environmental cleaning.

What is the hospital doing to help control the spread?

LDMH has implemented a new major Hand Hygiene campaign by educating all staff and physicians on proper hand-washing techniques. In addition, we have implemented a number of new cleaning protocols including introducing new cleaning products that help kill and destroy the c-difficile bacteria.

What can the community / visitors do to help?

The most important way to help control the spread of c-difficile is by washing your hands every time you enter the hospital. Hand gel is available at all entrances and exits and all visitors are encouraged to wash their hands. If your loved one is in a room with posted precautions on the door, PLEASE follow the precautions. They are there to prevent spread of the bacteria.