

About this card

Why have I been given this card?

You have been given this card because you have tested positive for C.diff.

Even if you don't have symptoms of infection at the moment you may be at risk of getting ill from it in the future.

What is the card for and what should I do with it?

Use this C.diff positive card to let other healthcare professionals know that you have tested positive for C.diff and you may be at risk of getting ill from it in the future.

This information is important because it can help them decide what medicines you should have and which ones to avoid.

Please peel off the card below and keep it with you.

Useful links and contacts

General information about C.diff:

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk

NHS Direct on **0845 46 47**

Health Protection Agency - www.hpa.org.uk

Handwashing tips and techniques:

National Patient Safety Agency - www.npsa.nhs.uk/cleanyourhands

Department of Health - www.dh.gov.uk

For queries or concerns, or to receive this information in another language or format, please ring:

Bradford and Airedale Patient Advice and Liaison Service on
01274 237555 / 07797 870008 (text phone)
Email pals@bradford.nhs.uk.

Write your GP details here...

Your GP's name:

Your GP's telephone number:

NHS

Your

C.diff positive card
and how to use it



A partnership project between all NHS Organisations and Local Authorities in the Airedale, Bradford and Leeds area.

About Clostridium difficile

What is Clostridium difficile (C.diff)?

There are lots of different bacteria that live naturally in the gut of health adults. In about 3% of adults this includes Clostridium difficile, also known as C diff.

How can C diff make you ill?

Having C.diff in your gut may not cause any problems. It is only when something disturbs the natural balance of the different bacteria in the gut that it can cause you to become ill. This is sometimes caused by certain antibiotics used to treat other illnesses, which can kill off healthy bacteria leaving room for too much C.diff to grow. This is what is known as a C.diff infection.

How is C.diff spread?

C.diff can be spread by contact with people who are carrying the germ or by touching a surface that has C.diff germs on it. A person who carries C.diff can release germs into the environment when they go to the toilet.

You can't see these germs but they can survive for long periods. They can be picked up on hands and surfaces and may lead to infection.

How do I know if I have C.diff?

People who get C.diff infection are usually told they have the infection after a sample of their poo has been tested in a laboratory.

Does my C.diff need treating?

Some types of C.diff produce a toxin; this can cause infection which will need treatment by your doctor.

What to look out for

If you have any of the following symptoms you may need treatment. Please speak to your GP and tell him or her that you have been given this leaflet. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhoea which can be mild or severe;
- Blood in your poo;
- Stomach ache or cramps;
- Stomach is tender to touch;
- Having a fever; or
- Loss of appetite.

What to do if you have symptoms

People who have symptoms of C.diff need to take extra precautions to reduce the effects of their illness. You should take advice on treatment from your doctor.

If you have symptoms of C.diff you should:

- Avoid contact with other people until you have been symptom free for 48 hours;
- Use bleach-based products to clean hard surfaces in kitchens and bathrooms-don't forget door handles and toilet flushes;
- Machine wash any soiled clothes separately at the highest possible temperature;
- Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before preparing or eating food: and
- Ask relatives and visitors to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Do not take medicines to stop diarrhoea. These stop the germ being cleared from your body.

What if I have a healthcare appointment?

If you are due to have an outpatient appointment, health tests or an operation, and have symptoms, telephone the hospital or your GP. They will be able to tell you whether your treatment can go ahead or if your appointment needs to be rearranged.

What to do if you don't have the symptoms

Up to a third of people who have tested positive for C.diff develop symptoms in the future, most commonly in the following 3 months, so it is important to recognise those symptoms. If you do get symptoms, follow the advice in this leaflet and speak to your doctor.

Use this card to let doctors, nurses, pharmacists, care home staff and healthcare workers know you have previously tested positive for C.diff.

Always wash your hands

Even if you don't have the symptoms of C.diff infection at the moment, it is really important to wash your hands properly. Alcohol hand gel does not kill C.diff germs. Washing hands thoroughly with soap and water is the best way to get rid of C.diff germs. Pay attention to cleaning between your fingers and in the creases of your hands where bacteria like to hide. Always dry your hands thoroughly.

Anyone involved in your care should also wash their hands before and after treating you. All our healthcare staff knows how important hand washing is but it is your right to check they do this when looking after you. If you are not sure whether your doctor, nurse or healthcare assistant has washed their hands with soap and water, please ask them to do so.