Clostridium Difficile
Also known as C. Diff

What is C. diff?
Clostridium difficile associated diarrhea is an infection in your gut. It is caused by a bacterium called Clostridium difficile which makes a poison which can cause diarrhea.

What are the signs and symptoms of C. diff?
Persons who have C. diff may have:

- Diarrhea (6-12 stools per day)
- Watery, yellow-green, often foul smelling stool
- Sometimes a small rise in temperature
- Nausea, stomach cramps, occasional vomiting.

Often, symptoms appear after antibiotic use, a serious illness, or surgery. The illness may last one to three weeks, but the diarrhea can last longer.

What does it mean to be colonized or infected?
Colonized means that C. diff is present in your body without causing symptoms. Infected means that C. diff is present and causing symptoms such as diarrhea.

What is the treatment for C. diff?
Treatment is often a pill or capsule you swallow. Your doctor may give you either Metronidazole (Flagyl) or Vancomycin. The choice of drug will depend on what is best for you. Treatment lasts seven to ten days. Medication ordinarily used to stop diarrhea such as Lomotil or Immodium should NOT be taken. These drugs have been shown to make this illness worse.

What will happen in the hospital when you have C. diff?
- You will be placed in a private room with your own toilet or commode. A sign will be placed outside of your room that says “Contact Precautions.”
- Your health care providers will wash their hands and wear gloves and gowns when in contact with you.
- Your visitors should follow the directions on the sign posted outside of your room.
- Visitors should wash their hands before and after they visit.
- When your stools become formed and you are no longer having diarrhea or other symptoms, “Contact Precautions” will end.
Some key general information for families residents and patients:

**GOOD HAND WASHING!**

You should wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds:
- After contact with a person who has C. diff
- After contact with blood fluids, patient care equipment, or items soiled with urine or stool
- Before leaving a patient’s room
- After gloves are removed

**EATING:**

Wash your hands very well before eating food. Do not share dishes, utensils or food with anyone.

**TOILETING/GROOMING:**

After toileting, wash your hands very well with soap and water.

**HOUSEHOLD CLEANING:**

Items that have been found to have the most bacteria are: toilets, chairs, bedpans, commodes, beds, sinks, bedrails, light switches, and telephones. It is important to clean these surfaces well with bleach to disinfect.

If you have any questions, please ask your nurse, your doctor, or contact the Infection Control Service. Our ophthalmology clinic wants to provide you with the very best up-to-date eye care available. Ophthalmology is a special branch of medicine. It deals with the treatment of eye and vision problems.

We may prescribe drugs or perform surgery. We may also do procedures and tests. Some of these are complex and take time to do. Your visit with us may last for some time. Because we serve many veterans, you may need to come prepared for a long wait. We feel that improving your sight is well worth the time.

What to expect:
- Excellent care
- Long wait (we thank you for being patient with us)
- Respect
- Understanding

At check-in, please let us know if you have any special needs. If you are diabetic, you may want to bring your lunch. Oxygen users should bring enough oxygen for several hours.

You will need a driver if:
- You are having surgery
- You are having a procedure in the clinic
- You cannot drive after your eyes are dilated

Be sure to let us know if you are traveling by DAV van or other shuttle services.

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**Phone:**
Visit your NF/SGVHS Internet site at:
http://www.northflorida.va.gov