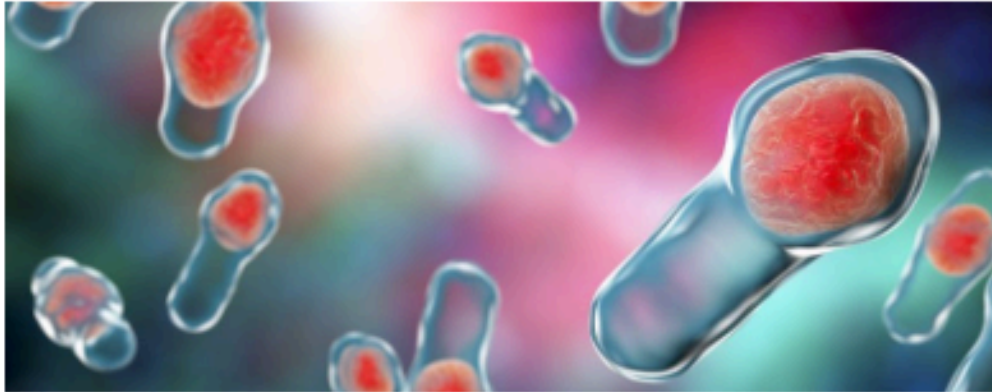


Clostridium difficile



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WHAT IS CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE?

Clostridium difficile (*C. difficile*) is an anaerobic, spore-forming, Gram-positive rod bacterium. It occurs naturally in both human and animal intestines. The bacteria most frequently colonize the intestines of small children (up to 80 percent), and fewer than 5 percent of adults. If the intestinal flora is disturbed, for example, by antibiotics, Clostridia can cause diarrhea.

HOW IS CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE TRANSMITTED?

In most cases, the pathogen is transmitted from person to person via a smear infection. Infection with the bacterium can also occur via surfaces such as toilets, or door knobs and handles. Even a few bacteria are enough to infect people. However, the infection does not always lead to symptoms.

WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE?

There are usually only a few days between antibiotic therapy, and the onset of the first symptoms. Bowel inflammation is manifested by sudden, watery diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain and fever. Blood may be in the stool, and excretions may have a foul odor. In severe cases, an intestinal obstruction, an acute enlargement of the large intestine, a hole or tear in the intestinal wall, or blood poisoning may occur. In some cases, the symptoms subside without specific treatment. People who are affected are very contagious, particularly during the acute phase of illness. However, for some time after symptoms have subsided, germs are still excreted along with the stool.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INFECTIONS IN HOSPITALS AND IN THE OUTPATIENT SECTOR

Clostridium difficile is the pathogen most responsible for diarrhea; it also causes a small proportion of postoperative wound infections.

SURVIVAL TIME OF PATHOGENS ON SURFACES

5 months

DISINFECTANT EFFECTIVENESS FOR PREVENTION

The necessary spectrum of activity against *Clostridium difficile* is: sporicidal