

## *Clostridium difficile* (Claw-stri-de-um di-fi-see!)

This information is provided in the form of general guidelines. Specific questions related to your situation should be addressed to your physician, nurse, or the Infection Control office at (415) 353-4343.

### ? What is *Clostridium difficile*?

*Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) is an organism that often lives normally in the gut without causing problems. However, in people whose normal gut function has been disrupted or who have taken certain antibiotics, the organism can get out of control and produce a toxin that causes mild to severe diarrhea. The organism is “shed” during bouts of diarrhea and can contaminate the environment and be spread to other people. Because it can survive in the environment for long periods of time, *C. difficile* has become a problem in health care facilities.

### ? What is done at UCSF to prevent the spread of *C. difficile*?

- UCSF uses CONTACT PRECAUTIONS for patients with diarrhea that might be caused by *C. difficile*.
- Staff will put a **GREEN** “STOP” sign on your door and wear gloves and gowns when entering your room.
- Staff will use soap and water instead of alcohol gel to clean their hands when leaving your room.
- Staff will clean the frequently touched surfaces in your room each day to decrease the numbers of *C. difficile* germs in your environment.



### ? What can I do to help?

- Clean your hands often – soap and water is most effective to rid your hands of *C. difficile*.
- Be sure visitors entering your room have read the sign on your door.
- Limit your visitors to a few family members or close friends.

### ? What should my family and visitors do?

- Clean their hands with soap and water OR alcohol hand gel when entering your room; use soap and water to clean their hands **before** leaving your room.
- Interact with you normally (holding hands, kissing) but avoid contact with your dressings or urine bag.
- Because your visitors don't go into the rooms of other patients, they don't need to wear gowns & gloves while visiting you.
- Go to the nurse's station if they have any questions.

### ? How do I clean my hands correctly?

#### Use soap and water:

- Wet hands with warm water
- Dispense one measure of soap into palm.
- Work up lather by rubbing hands together for 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
- Rinse hands thoroughly
- Dry hands with paper towel.
- Use a towel to turn off faucet.
- Discard towel in the trash container.

#### Use Alcohol Gel:

- Dispense one measure of gel into palm of one dry hand
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until dry, about 15 – 20 seconds.
- Hand cleaning with soap and water is recommended when leaving the room of a patient with *C. difficile*.