

***Clostridium difficile* (Claw-stri-de-um di-fi-seel)**

This info sheet gives you general guidelines. Address specific questions about to your situation with your doctor or nurse.

? **What is *Clostridium difficile*?**

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

? **How does UCSF reduce the spread of *C. difficile*?**

- UCSF uses CONTACT ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS for patients with diarrhea that might be caused by *C. difficile*.
- Staff will put a CONTACT ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS 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 high-touch 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 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.
- Behave normally with you (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:

- Hand cleaning with soap and water is recommended when leaving the room of a patient with *C. difficile*.

It is okay to remind our staff to clean their hands!