

Management of *Clostridium difficile* Infection in Primary Care

Guidance to be read in conjunction with National Clinical Guideline No. 3
Surveillance, Diagnosis and Management of *Clostridium difficile* Infection in Ireland (June 2014)

When to suspect *C. difficile* infection (CDI):

Diarrhoea in the presence of the following risk factors:

- Prolonged or multiple antibiotic use, elderly, co-morbidities, immunosuppression, functional or cognitive impairment, recent gastrointestinal surgery, recent prolonged hospital stay or exposure to person with *C. difficile* infection
- If you suspect CDI - Send faeces to the microbiology laboratory for *C. difficile* testing

Positive Laboratory result for *C. difficile* toxin

- Is this the first episode of *C. difficile* infection? If YES see below
- If not and this diagnosis is a relapse of a previously positive patient, contact the Consultant Microbiologist / Infectious Disease Physician for advice



Assess the patient for severity* (will affect management)

IF SEVERE* *C. difficile* infection:

- Refer patients with severe infection to hospital
- Inform the hospital of potential severe CDI diagnosis

IF NON SEVERE *C. difficile* infection:

1. Wash your hands with soap & water before and after examining the patient
2. Review antimicrobials - Immediately discontinue unnecessary antimicrobial therapy
3. Review the requirement for and dose of proton pump inhibitors
4. Avoid antimotility medications
5. If symptoms have resolved – observe.
6. If the patient is symptomatic (i.e., diarrhoea) commence antibiotics for *C. difficile*
 - Oral metronidazole 400 mg TDS for 10 to 14 days).
 - Inability to take oral medication, metronidazole intolerance or contraindication, contact the Consultant Microbiologist / Infectious Disease Physician for advice



STOOL SAMPLES FOR CLEARANCE ARE NOT REQUIRED



- Download the **patient information leaflet** from the HPSC website.
<http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/Gastroenteric/Clostridiumdifficile/Factsheets/>
- Advise the patient with regards to good hygiene and the importance of suitable and adequate fluids.
- Advise the patient to contact the GP surgery if symptoms persist. If GP surgery requires advice on treatment contact Consultant Microbiologist /ID physician for advice

* Indicators of severity may include fever, hypotension, abdominal pain, dehydration, raised white cell count and/or inflammatory markers, low albumin.

Further information

www.health.gov.ie/patient-safety/ncec

www.hse.ie/go/antibiotics

www.hse.ie/handhygiene

www.hpsc.ie

www.hse.ie