The MRE-Netz Rhein-Main e.V. is a registered society of health departments, hospitals and other players in the public health sector of the Rhein Main region.

Clostridium difficile

How can I deal with Clostridium difficile in my house?

You can greatly reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to healthy housemates by observing the following hygiene recommendations:

- The affected person should disinfect his/her hands with an alcoholic disinfectant and then wash them thoroughly with liquid soap after going to the toilet.

- If possible, the affected person should use his/her own toilet, which should be disinfected after he or she goes to the toilet.

- Bedlinen, towels, washcloths and underwear should be changed daily.

- Underwear, bedlinen and towels should be washed at 60°C minimum with a full amount of detergent.

- If possible, dirty dishes should be washed with the dishwasher at 60°C minimum.

You can receive further information

- Telephone MRE – Netz Rhein-Main – **069-212-4 88 84**
- Email **mre-rhein-main@stadt-frankfurt.de**
- Internet **www.mre-rhein-main.de**

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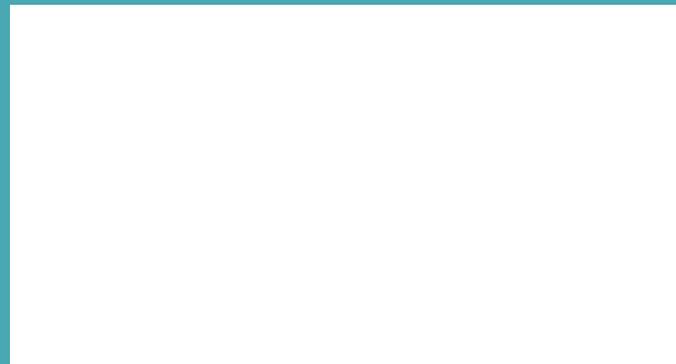
Clostridium difficile

What is Clostridium difficile and what diseases can it cause?

Clostridium difficile is a bacteria which forms toxins (bacterial toxins). It is able to encapsulate itself (spores) in order to survive outside of the body. This bacteria occurs naturally in the intestine in approximately 5% of the population without causing any problems. In certain circumstances (e.g. when ingesting antibiotics), the normal intestinal bacteria can be reduced. In this case, Clostridium difficile can multiply greatly and can release more bacterial toxins, which harm the intestinal lining. The results of this can range from massive diarrhea with stomach cramps and fever to an infection of the intestinal lining.

How is Clostridium difficile transmitted?

Affected persons release pathogens with their stool. Transmission results from direct person-to-person contact or indirectly from unclean objects and surfaces where pathogens can remain for a longer period of time. People are especially contagious during the acute sickness (diarrhea phase).

Who can catch Clostridium difficile?

Principally, people of all ages can become sick. Clostridium difficile is more prevalent in cases of antibiotic therapy, a weak immune system, after large stomach operations, intensive therapy, and for patients over 65. Living in the same room with patients/residents with Clostridium difficile can increase chances of an infection. Clostridium difficile infections often occur in hospitals and nursing homes. They are less common at home.

Can one treat Clostridium difficile infections?

A colonization of Clostridium difficile in the intestine without any symptoms will not be treated.

If there is a suspicion or confirmed diagnosis of a Clostridium difficile infection with diarrhea and potential intestinal infection, antibiotic treatment will be ended. This often causes the symptoms to disappear.

Special antibiotics can be used in the case of persistent symptoms. Symptoms can return after ending this special antibiotic treatment.

This does not mean that you have been infected again because, in some cases, the treatment must be continued or another antibiotic must be used. Additionally, there can be chronic symptoms.

How should I behave when visiting a healthcare institution (hospitals/old people's homes and nursing homes?

Rules for dealing with patients/inhabitants who carry Clostridium difficile are integrated in the respective hygiene plans of these institutions (e.g. carrying protective clothing, gloves, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, etc.)

If you visit an affected person, you should ask the responsible personell about special hygiene procedures before entering the room.

It is always important to disenfect your hands when leaving the room or institution and then to wash your hands thoroughly with liquid soap with running water.