

# C. diff infection: Am I at risk?

Antibiotics can save lives. Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects including *C. diff* infection. Talk with a healthcare professional about your risk for developing *C. diff* infection when starting an antibiotic.

## What is *C. diff* infection?

*C. diff* is a germ (bacterium) that causes diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon) and can be life-threatening.

*Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*) is estimated to cause almost half a million infections in the United States each year.

## Who is at risk for *C. diff* infection?

*C. diff* can affect anyone, but certain factors increase your risk. Most cases of *C. diff* infection occur during or after taking an antibiotic. That's because antibiotics that fight bacterial infections by killing bad germs can also get rid of the good germs that protect the body against harmful infections, like *C. diff* infections.

### Risk factors include:



Antibiotic use  
in the last  
3 months



Previous infection  
with *C. diff* or  
known exposure to  
the germs



Recent stay at  
a hospital or  
nursing home

65+

Older age



A weakened  
immune system, such  
as people with  
HIV/AIDS or cancer

If you develop symptoms of *C. diff* infection while or after taking an antibiotic, contact a healthcare professional to discuss and be evaluated.

### Symptoms of *C. diff* infection can include:



Diarrhea



Fever



Loss of  
appetite



Nausea



Stomach  
tenderness  
or pain