

Patient Information Service

Infection prevention and control team

What is Clostridium difficile GDH? (Glutamate Dehydrogenase)

What is GDH?

Our laboratory carries out two types of test for suspected Clostridium difficile infections. The first of these tests is GDH (Glutamate Dehydrogenase), and if this is positive, it is likely that you are carrying Clostridium difficile in your bowel, which is unlikely to cause you a problem. The second test is the Clostridium difficile toxin test (CDT). If that is positive, it is likely that Clostridium difficile is causing an infection and will require treatment.

How is diagnosis made?

Diagnosis is made by sending a stool sample for testing to the laboratory.

How will I be looked after whilst in hospital?

If you have diarrhoea and your stool has been found to be GDH positive it will be necessary to care for you in a single room where your symptoms will be reviewed daily by nursing staff.

Treatment

Staff caring for you will wash their hands, wear gloves and aprons to protect you and other patients. Hands should be washed with soap and water as alcohol hand sanitiser is not effective.

What can I do to speed up my recovery?

It is important that you wash your hands with soap and water before you eat or drink and after you have been to the toilet. Make sure that any food you have is covered or kept inside your locker. It will help if you drink lots of fluid to avoid becoming dehydrated while you have diarrhoea.

Use of pro-biotic drinks

A research paper published in the *British Medical Journal* June 2007 has suggested that the use of certain pro-biotic yoghurt drinks may help reduce the risk of *Clostridium difficile* infection. You may wish to try pro-biotic drinks at home.

However, pro-biotic drinks are not suitable for everyone and should be avoided by those individuals who are lactose intolerant or those with medical conditions which cause immunosuppression, for example some cancers, HIV etc. Please check with your GP/consultant/specialist.

What happens when I stop having diarrhoea?

Once your diarrhoea has stopped and your bowels have returned to normal it may be possible to move you out of a single room. The staff looking after you will let you know when this can happen.

Will it delay my discharge from hospital?

Your doctors will decide when you are well enough to go home. They will want to make sure that your diarrhoea is settling and

that you are able to eat and drink normally. If you are waiting to be transferred to another hospital the transfer may be delayed until your symptoms have settled.

What happens if I have diarrhoea again?

Sometimes the diarrhoea can start again. This may be after you have gone home, or while you are still in hospital. It can sometimes be as a result of the same infection, or for another reason. It is important to tell a doctor or nurse if your diarrhoea starts up again and you may be asked by either your GP (if you are at home), or the nurses, if you are still in hospital to provide another stool sample.

Who can I talk to?

If you have any questions about your condition, please talk to one of the nursing or medical staff.

What happens about washing my clothes?

If you have any soiled clothing, the nurses looking after you should put it in a plastic bag. Healthy people are unlikely to be affected by *Clostridium difficile*; however we suggest the following actions are taken:

It is best that this clothing is washed as a separate load from other items. The contents of the bag should be emptied straight into the washing machine and the plastic bag put into the rubbish bin. Hands should be washed with soap and water at this point. The hottest wash that will not damage the clothing should be used.



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If this leaflet does not answer all of your questions, or if you have any other concerns please contact the infection prevention and control team on: **01702 435555 ext 6639, 6919 or 6986.**

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