

Infectious Diarrhea (*C. difficile*)



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Communicable Disease Division
3629 South D Street, Tacoma, WA 98418
(253) 798-6410 (phone) • (253) 798-7666 (fax)

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to a type of diarrhea caused by the bacterium ***C difficile***. Many different types of bacteria and viruses cause diarrhea. Any child who is currently experiencing diarrhea should be excluded from childcare and be evaluated by their healthcare provider.

What are the symptoms of *C difficile* diarrhea?

Symptoms often include abdominal cramps, tenderness, fever and the passage of stools containing blood and mucus.

How is *C difficile* diarrhea spread?

The illness may spread to other people if the germ gets into the body through the mouth. Touching objects contaminated with the stool of an infected person and then touching the mouth or food may also spread germs causing diarrhea.

How is *C difficile* disease diagnosed and treated?

A healthcare provider can usually make a diagnosis of *C difficile*. To diagnose *C difficile* disease, stool should be tested for the presence of *C difficile* toxins. A healthcare provider will determine the best treatment for *C difficile*.

How do you control the spread?

- Thorough hand washing, proper handling of contaminated waste (including diapers).
- Proper cleaning and sanitizing of toys that are handled and furniture.
- Limiting the use of unnecessary antimicrobial medications are the best methods for control of *C difficile* disease.
- Children with *C difficile* colitis will be excluded from childcare until the diarrhea is resolved.

How do I get more information?

For more information about *C difficile*, contact your healthcare provider or Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at (253) 798-6410 and press "0".