

AGA Patient Education Section

Clostridium difficile

Clostridium difficile is a bacterial infection of the intestine that may cause gut symptoms such as:

- Diarrhea (very liquid stool) 3 or more times a day for more than 2 days
- Belly pain and cramps
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite (not feeling hungry)

In more serious cases, symptoms may include:

- Severe diarrhea, as often as 15 times a day
- Severe belly pain and cramps
- Dehydration (when the body loses too much fluid)
- Weight loss

Risk Factors

- Antibiotic treatment
- Age >65 years
- Hospital stay or surgery
- Chronic illness; weak immune system
- Prior treatment of *C difficile*
- 40% without risk factors

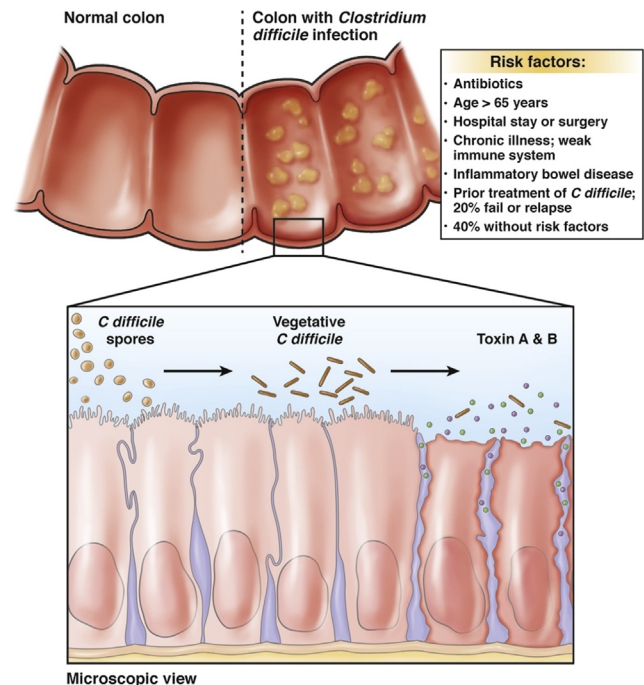
Getting Tested

Your doctor may choose 1 or more tests to make the diagnosis and judge how bad your infection is:

- Stool tests and cultures
- Blood lab tests
- Colonoscopy
- Computed tomography scan

Treatment

Your doctor will choose your treatment based on how bad your infection is and your medical history. Treatment may include:



- Antibiotics
- Probiotics
- Surgery
- Fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT)

If your doctor suggests you have an FMT, ask them to learn more about the AGA Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) National Registry at www.gastro.org/fmtregistry. If you have received an FMT, you are strongly encouraged to be a part of it.

For more information on *C difficile*, talk to your gastroenterologist and visit <https://www.gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/clostridium-difficile-c-diff>.