

# About C. diff.

## What is C. diff.?

Clostridium difficile—commonly called C. diff.—is a bacterium that causes diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions such as colitis and sepsis. While C. diff. is often treated with a 10-day course of antibiotics, some strains are AROs.

## What are the symptoms of C. diff.?

- ◆ watery diarrhea (at least three bowel movements per day for two or more days)
- ◆ fever
- ◆ loss of appetite
- ◆ nausea
- ◆ abdominal pain/tenderness

## How do people get C. diff. disease?

C. diff is found in feces. People can become infected if they touch items or surfaces that are contaminated with feces and then touch their mouth or mucous membranes. Anyone can spread the bacteria to other patients or contaminate surfaces through hand contact.

## What should I do to prevent the spread of C. diff. to others?

ARO-prevention guidelines, including proper hand washing, can help you prevent the spread of C. diff.

## The Silvercrest Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation

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- ◆ Older and younger adults who are chronically ill or traumatized and who make Silvercrest their home.
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**Giving Quality to Life**

# About ARO's & C. diff.

Antibiotic-resistant  
organisms &  
Clostridium difficile

# About AROs

## What are AROs (antibiotic-resistant organisms)?

Antibiotic-resistant organisms—commonly called AROs—are germs that are not killed by the usual medicines (antibiotics). If a drug-resistant germ causes an infection, a stronger medicine must be used to treat it. AROs include methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), vancomycin-resistant enterococcus (VRE) and clostridium difficile (*C. diff.*—see *side panel for more information on C. diff.*). While many people become sick with an ARO, some carry these germs without becoming sick. Certain tests, called cultures, show that a person is carrying or is infected with an ARO.

## Who is at risk for AROs?

Generally, people with lower immunity, older adults, and people with open wounds are at risk for infection from AROs.

## How do people get AROs?

The normal germs in the body may have changed to a resistant strain, or the person infected may have picked it up from someone else. AROs are spread when someone touches an infected area on the body or items or furniture that have been contaminated with these germs.

## What is different about the care of a resident or patient with an ARO?

- ◆ Whenever possible, Silvercrest will isolate a person with an ARO, either in a private room or with another resident with the same infection.
- ◆ People with AROs should not leave their rooms without staff permission.
- ◆ If the patient must go to another part of the facility, he or she must wash hands before leaving the room. The patient may need to wear a gown or mask; a staff member will help with the proper attire.
- ◆ A “STOP AND REPORT TO NURSE” sign will be placed on the patient’s door to alert those who wish to enter the room about the special precautions.
- ◆ Visitors and people taking care of the person with an ARO must wear gowns and gloves and may also need a mask.
- ◆ Everyone must wash their hands after removing gowns and gloves and before leaving the room.

## What do visitors need to know?

- ◆ Visitors who are seeing a patient with an ARO should not visit other patients during their visit. They should also follow the above outlined precautions.
- ◆ Healthy visitors do not need to wear a gown or gloves while visiting residents who do not have an ARO, unless they are helping with care that might involve touching body fluids.
- ◆ People must clean their hands thoroughly before leaving the room of any resident or patient.

## How can people avoid the development of an ARO?

Silvercrest staff uses routine and special precautions to prevent the spread of germs. You can help, too:

- ◆ When taking antibiotics, continue to take them until all of the medication is completed.
- ◆ Never give someone else antibiotics that have been prescribed for you.
- ◆ Use precautions to stop the spread of germs (like frequent and proper hand washing).

## How do I properly wash my hands?

Special attention should be paid to hand washing, as this is the most important practice to prevent the spread of germs. Follow these steps:

- ◆ Use warm running water and soap.
- ◆ Lather and rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, cuticles, around rings and under nails.
- ◆ Spend at least 15 seconds washing.
- ◆ Rinse thoroughly and pat dry.
- ◆ If you are visiting a patient with an ARO or any infectious disease, use a clean paper towel to turn off the tap and to open the door.
- ◆ Apply lotion to your hands frequently to help prevent dry, cracked skin, which can serve as an opening for germs and infection.
- ◆ Hand hygiene dispensers are mounted on the walls in most resident rooms. Place a dime size amount in your palm and rub hands briskly until dry. This is a fast and easy way to kill germs on your hands.