Facts About Clostridium difficile

What is it?
Clostridium difficile (or C. difficile) is a spore-forming bacterium found in the intestines, causing a variety of symptoms, from diarrhea to more serious life-threatening intestinal disease. A survey by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC) found that C. difficile infections cost American healthcare institutions $17.6 million to $51.5 million each day — and the incidence rate of 13 out of every 1,000 inpatients either infected or colonized with C. difficile is 6.5 to 20 times greater than previous incidence estimates.1

Transmission and treatment
C. difficile bacteria is found in feces and can be transmitted by hand to frequently touched surfaces such as bedding, toilets, bedpans, light switches and grab bars. People can become infected if they touch contaminated surfaces or items and then touch their mouths or mucous membranes. Treatment may include discontinuing the antibiotic that caused the infection and then prescribing a different antibiotic.

Who is at risk?
The risk of contracting C. difficile increases in the elderly and in patients with previous antibiotic use, gastrointestinal surgery, serious underlying illness, immunocompromising conditions and long stays in healthcare settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare institutions.

Decontamination of environmental surfaces
C. difficile spores are resistant to many commonly used disinfectants, sanitizers and cleaning agents, and even alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Because C. difficile patients can contaminate their environment and the spores can persist on surfaces for months, adherence to the CDC “Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health Care Facilities” is critical to help reduce the spread of C. difficile spores.

Clorox Healthcare® Bleach Germicidal Wipes are EPA-registered to kill C. difficile spores.

How can I help prevent the spread of C. difficile-associated disease infection in hospitals and other healthcare settings?
The CDC recommends 6 Steps for Prevention:
1. Prescribe and use antibiotics carefully.
2. Test for C. difficile when patients have diarrhea while on antibiotics.
3. Isolate C. difficile patients immediately.
4. Wear gloves and gowns when treating C. difficile patients.
5. Clean C. difficile rooms with an EPA-registered bleach disinfectant.
6. When a C. difficile patient transfers, notify the new facility of the infection.