

Antibiotics are an important weapon in the fight against disease. Help us keep them working. Always let your doctor decide if you need an antibiotic.

5. **TRUE.** Perform excellent hand hygiene when caring for all residents. Use soap and water instead of alcohol-based hand rubs when caring for residents with *C. difficile* infection; *C. difficile* spores are not killed by alcohol and can last for months in the environment.
4. **A.** Judicious use of antibiotics is one of the most important aspects in preventing *C. difficile* infection. Accurate nursing assessment of a resident's status is essential to help physicians and nurse practitioners prescribe antibiotics judiciously.
3. **D.** Antibiotic exposure is the major risk factor for *C. difficile* infection. More than 90% of all cases occur during or after antibiotic therapy. All antibiotics are implicated but broad-spectrum antibiotics are more likely to cause disease.
2. **TRUE.** After discontinuing the antibiotic, normal bowel flora can begin to return (this can take as long as 4-6 weeks after stopping the antibiotic). *C. difficile* infection symptoms resolve in 20-25% of people after stopping the use of the "offending antimicrobial."
1. **C.** *C. difficile* is the most common non-epidemic cause of acute diarrhea in long-term care facilities. High rates of antibiotic use contribute to the risk of *C. difficile* infection.

Answers:

Preventing *Clostridium difficile* in Long-term Care

The bacterium *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) is a major cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhea. The elderly are at highest risk for morbidity and mortality from *C. difficile* infection. Key prevention measures include hand hygiene and judicious antibiotic use. Take the quiz to learn more!

1. The most common infectious cause of diarrhea in elderly, long-term care residents is:
 - a. Rotavirus
 - b. *Salmonella*
 - c. *C. difficile*
 - d. *E. coli*
2. True or False: Any non-essential antibiotics should be stopped in a resident with confirmed *C. difficile* diarrhea.
3. Which of the following antibiotics are most commonly associated with *C. difficile* infection?
 - a. Cephalosporins
 - b. Clindamycin
 - c. Fluoroquinolones
 - d. All of the above
4. Which of the following is an effective way to prevent or contain outbreaks of *C. difficile* infection?
 - a. Judicious use of antibiotics
 - b. Using alcohol-based hand rub instead of soap and water
 - c. Screening for *C. difficile* colonization
5. True or False: A major mode of *C. difficile* transmission is through the hands of healthcare workers.

(Answers on other side.)

