

What is C.difficile?

C.difficile and its spores, is one of the many bacteria present in the gut and feces of a person. Some people may carry C.difficile in their gut without any signs or symptoms.

Antibiotics are medications that help fight an infection. However, these medications also destroy the good bacteria allowing C.difficile to grow. When C. difficile bacteria is present in unusually high number, they also produce toxins that can damage the gut, cause diarrhea and make the person sick.

C.difficile is the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in hospitals or long-term care homes.

What are the symptoms of C.difficile infection?

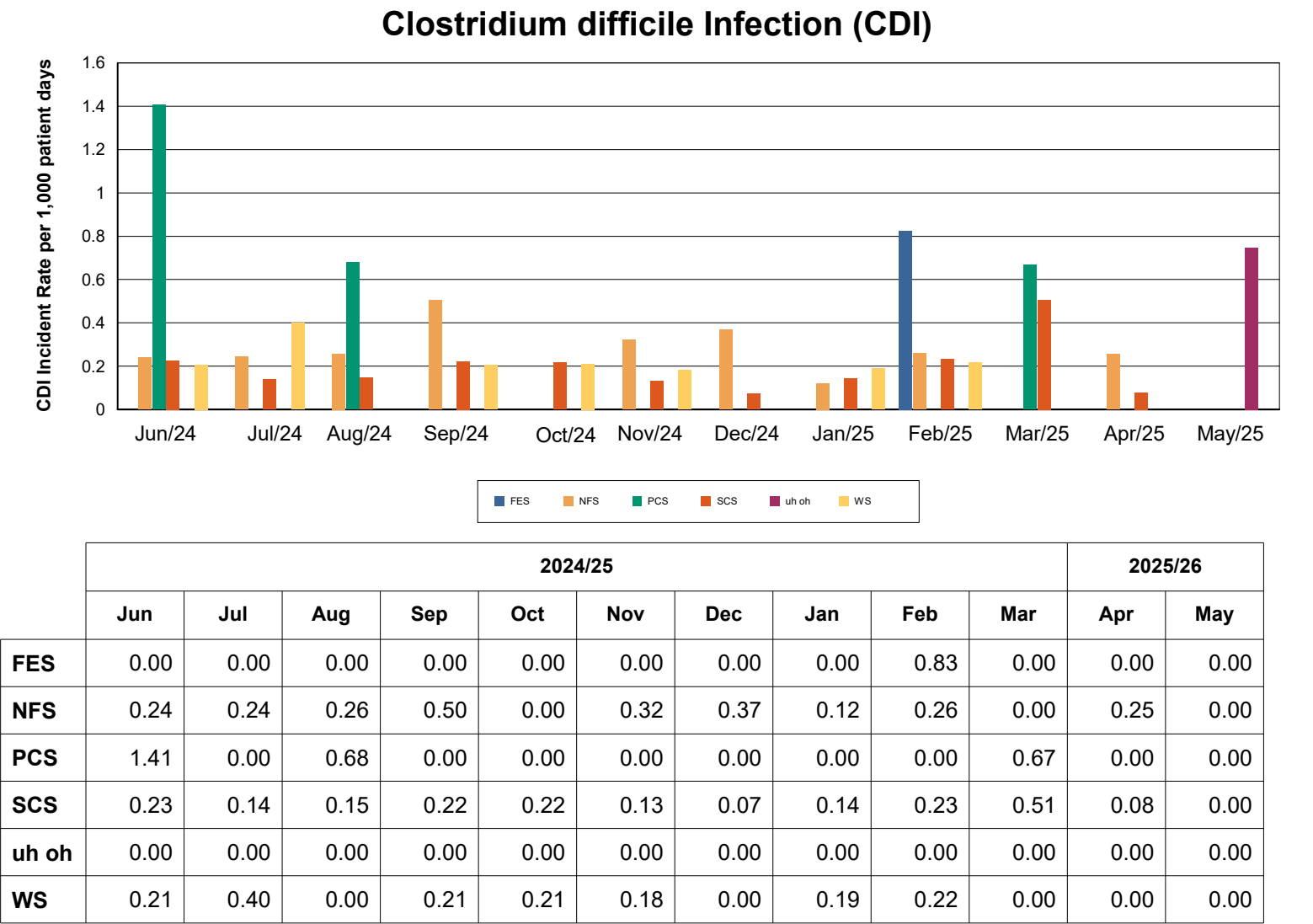
Symptoms can range from mild to severe diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain or tenderness. In severe infections, C.difficile may cause death.

How does C.difficile spread in a health care setting?

When a person has C. difficile infection, the bacteria in the feces can contaminate surfaces such as toilet, commode chair, bed, chair, bedpans, or door handles. When touching these items, the hands can also become contaminated. When hands and equipment are not cleaned properly, C. difficile can be spread to you, others and other surfaces.

C.difficile Indicator

Niagara Health monitors the trend of healthcare-associated C. difficile cases (expressed in rate/1000 patient days) and recommends strategies to prevent and control the spread of infection.



What is NH doing to prevent *C. difficile* infection?

We continue to promote and implement appropriate infection prevention and control strategies, which include but not limited to the following:

- Monitor, identify and implement additional precautions for patients with *C.difficile*;
- Promote and review appropriate use of antibiotics;
- Ensure accessibility and visibility of hand hygiene resources to promote hand hygiene compliance;
- Monitor hand hygiene compliance of staff, physicians and volunteers in accordance with the Four Moments for Hand Hygiene;
- Adhere to best practice standards in environmental cleaning and equipment hygiene;
- Ongoing education of patients, staff and volunteers