



## WHAT?

**C. difficile** can be found in a normal colon, however normal gut bacteria keep it in check so the person remains asymptomatic.

**Antibiotic use** can disrupt this balance, leading to the bacteria multiplying and producing a toxin.

Most common **symptoms?**

- Watery diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain
- Fever

Most common **causative antibiotics?**

- Ampicillin
- 2nd and 3rd generation cephalosporins
- Clindamycin
- Fluoroquinolones

## WHY?

Outside of the body it becomes a resistant spore which survives for long periods unless surfaces are thoroughly cleaned. Be warned...

### HIGHLY INFECTIOUS!

Causes inflammation of the colon (**pseudomembranous colitis**).

Diagnosis with stool samples – immunoassay and PCR.

### Management?

- Stop antibiotic and PPI
- Oral metronidazole, in mild to moderate cases unless contraindication (oral vancomycin is alternative)
- Oral Vancomycin in more
- Severe disease

Complications include ileus and toxic megacolon (see *pic*).

## HOW?

**Clostridium difficile: Summary** (*BMJ Best Practice*)

<http://bit.ly/2Clx8rC>

**How you get C. difficile** (*NHS Choices*) <http://bit.ly/2F0L9iJ>

**Clostridium difficile: guidance, data and analysis** (*GOV.UK*)

<http://bit.ly/2CsxHIR>

Example of toxic megacolon, resulting from C. diff

