



What Is *Clostridium difficile*?

- 🐾 *Clostridium difficile* is a type of bacteria that lives in the intestine of people, dogs, cats and many other animals. Its name is very long, so it's often just called *C. difficile*.
- 🐾 In French, "difficile" means difficult. *C. difficile* is very difficult to grow in a laboratory, which is how it got its name.
- 🐾 Some *C. difficile* bacteria (but not all of them) make poisons called toxins, which can make people and animals have diarrhea.
- 🐾 People who are already sick or in the hospital can sometimes get even sicker if they catch *C. difficile*.
- 🐾 Sometimes a person or an animal may have *C. difficile* without knowing it, and without getting sick at all.



Where Does *C. difficile* Come From?

- 🐾 *C. difficile* comes from poop of people or pets who already have *C. difficile* in their intestine.
- 🐾 In the poop, the *C. difficile* bacteria turn into things called spores. The spores are like bacteria with armour, so they can survive for years, even if it's hot, cold, wet or dry.



How Do People & Pets Get *C. difficile*?

- 🐾 People usually get *C. difficile* because they touch something that has a very tiny amount of poop on it, and then they touch their nose, their mouth or their food and swallow the *C. difficile*.
- 🐾 Pets can get *C. difficile* from eating or licking something that has poop on it, or maybe from drinking out of the toilet.

How Do I Know If My Pet Has *C. difficile*?

- 🐾 Most pets don't get sick from *C. difficile*. If they do get sick they get diarrhea, just like people.
- 🐾 If your pet has diarrhea (really soft, runny poop), your pet might need to go to the vet.
- 🐾 Your vet can test your pet's poop to see if there are *C. difficile* toxins in it.
- 🐾 Your vet will also check your pet to make sure there isn't anything else making him or her sick. Your pet might need some medicine if he or she has *C. difficile*.

Can I Get *C. difficile* From My Pet?

Maybe. The *C. difficile* bacteria can sometimes be in the poop from pets, and from people, even if they don't look sick. But if some gets in your mouth, the *C. difficile* might be able to make you sick. To make sure you don't get sick, this is what you should do:

- 👉 Always wash your hands well after you play with your pet.
- ✗ Don't touch anyone's face (including yours!) or touch any food until you've washed your hands.
- ✗ Don't touch your pet's bum, even if it looks clean.
- ✗ Don't let your pet lick your face.
- ✗ If you have a dog, don't let him eat poop off the ground or drink from the toilet.

