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**CAN A DIETARY STRATEGY
REDUCE C. DIFF INFECTION
RATES**



Clostridium Difficile is one of the UK's most prevalent HCAs, with 24 people out of every 10,000 acquiring a C. Diff infection¹.

C. Diff causes severe diarrhoea, with the consequences of catching the bacterial infection ranging from severe dehydration, colon damage or even death.

Adults over the age of 65 are particularly at risk, often due to weakened immune systems; similarly, as a knock-on effect, they are more likely to experience relapses of C. Diff due to a poor immune response. These instances are all the more dangerous for older people, partially due to the fact that they're more likely to suffer from a pre-existing condition, such as heart disease.

C. Diff's prevalence in older populations is heightened by the nature of care home environments.

Close living quarters and group activities are all contributors to C. Diff's ability to thrive in [residential care facilities](#). Teamed with the fact that this community is more likely to be taking antibiotics, it's the perfect climate for C. Diff to both develop and frequently reoccur.

Unhealthy, or 'dysbiotic', gut microbes are often associated with the groups of people who are predisposed to instances of C. Diff; however, there is increasing evidence that dietary strategies can be of benefit.

A recent study by the Mayo Clinic found that higher levels of amino acids – particularly proline – were found in mice who had a dysbiotic gut. As clostridium difficile requires amino acids in order to proliferate (and can't create them on its own), the research team suggested that reducing dietary amino acids could protect against C. Diff.

Although more research is required to understand the relationship, feeding mice diets that were low in protein also moderately lowered the growth of clostridium difficile, providing further evidence that amino acids could play a role in reducing infection risk, particularly in highly susceptible groups.

In addition to helping the gut protect against clostridium difficile, a dietary strategy can aid healing, as well as reduce the risk of repeat occurrences.

In order to optimise the health of the gut and guard against C. Diff, the following foods should be avoided:

- Red meat
- Eggs and dairy
- Plant-based protein sources, such as quinoa and soy products.

These protein-rich foods can help clostridium difficile to develop, thus increasing the severity of the illness for the sufferer and also the chance of the infection coming back.

To help the body to repair after a clostridium difficile infection, the following foods will help to repopulate the gut with good bacteria, and reduce the risk of C. Diff re-growing:

- Probiotic bacteria (as found in yoghurt, and other fermented foods)
- Soft foods, which avoid nuts, seeds and foods that are high in fibre.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724033/CDI_infographic_2018.pdf

Diets that are rich in soluble/fermentable fibre have been found, in some animal studies, to help eliminate C. Diff faster than diets high in insoluble fibre; oats, beans, peas and rice bran are therefore to be favoured over the insoluble fibre found in wheat breads, cereals, bran, rye and rice.

Although diet can't prevent outbreaks of C. Diff in its entirety, it can potentially reduce the rate of infection, and also improve outcomes.

DDC Dolphin can help to support your facility in the adoption of a robust infection control strategy, thus reducing and controlling the prevalence of HCAs.

By implementing [sluice room best practices](#), as well as using the correct machinery and supplies to dispose of human waste, your facility can protect its service users and clinicians from the devastation of preventable, healthcare-acquired infections.

From [pulp macerators](#) and [bedpan washer disinfectors](#), to complete service and [maintenance solutions](#), DDC Dolphin have the expertise to assist you in a complete infection control strategy.

[Contact us today](#) to find out more.

Contact Details: -

Tel: +44 1202 731555

E-mail: info@ddcdolphin.com

Website: www.ddcdolphin.com



DDC Dolphin Ltd, The Fulcrum, Vantage Way, Poole, Dorset, BH12 4NU, United Kingdom.