

C. diff infection: Is your patient at risk?

Assess the Risk

C. diff infection can affect anyone, but some patients are at higher risk — especially those with the following risk factors:



Antibiotic use in the last 3 months



Serious underlying or immunocompromising conditions



Previous history of C. diff infection



Extended stay in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes

65+

Older age

Higher-risk antibiotics

that are more likely to predispose your patient to C. diff infection include:

- **Clindamycin**
- **Fluoroquinolones** (e.g., ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin)
- **Third/fourth generation cephalosporins** (e.g., cefepime, ceftriaxone, cefdinir, cefixime)

Optimize Antibiotic Therapy

To minimize the risk of C. diff infection:

1

Prescribe the most targeted and safe antibiotic.

- In patients with a history of C. diff infection, avoid the use of higher-risk antibiotics when other effective therapy is available.
- If your patient reports a penicillin allergy, determine whether they are truly allergic to decrease unnecessary use of higher-risk antibiotics.

2

Use the shortest effective antibiotic duration.

3

Reassess antibiotic therapy based on your patient's clinical condition and relevant culture results.

Educate Your Patients

When prescribing an antibiotic:

- Educate patients about their risk and symptoms of C. diff infection.
- Counsel patients on how to seek care if symptoms of C. diff infection develop.

This document is meant to provide general information and does not apply to all clinical scenarios. Always assess the individual patient, use your clinical judgment, and follow your institution's treatment guidelines and protocols when applicable.



Learn more at
cdc.gov/c-diff
cdc.gov/antibiotic-use

