How C. Diff Infections Decrease with Fewer Antibiotics

The percentage of new Clostridium difficile infections reported in healthcare facilities has dropped for the first time since 2000, says the CDC's Emerging Infections Program. A sneak peek at the information on C. diff infections from 2011-2014 provided by shows a decrease in the rates of infections in healthcare settings. According to Dr. Alice Guh, a medical officer at the Centers for Disease Control, "Preliminary analyses suggest a 9 to 15 percent decrease in health care [C. diff] incidence nationally."

But wait! The actual number of C. diff infections is on the rise. In 2011, deaths from C. diff infections reached almost 30,000 people and an additional 500,000 cases of illness were reported. So what does it mean when infections are on the decline in healthcare settings where they are most commonly contracted, yet on the rise elsewhere? Science does not yet have an answer, but current positive results indicate that cleanliness, not antibiotics, is the future.

A Brief Primer

Many of the people who have C. diff in their intestine never develop an infection, because our "beneficial" bacteria in the gut are able to keep pathogens in check, like with candida. If the beneficial bacteria are not able to counteract the c. diff, infections can cause diarrhea, painful stomach cramping, kidney infections, fever, and dehydration in varying degrees. C. diff is also an incredibly resilient bacteria. Spores can last for months outside of the body and can only be killed with bleach, UV cleaning, and other similar methods.

The treatment for C. diff is usually antibiotics, stronger antibiotics, and the antibiotics of last resort. For anyone who is at all familiar with how the gut functions, this is a recipe for disaster. The antibiotics set the gut up for failure by killing the beneficial bacteria that balance gut flora and keep the C. diff in check. Studies have shown that even occupying the same hospital room as someone who has taken antibiotics increases the likelihood of a C. diff infection developing.

"C"-ing a Difference

So what has changed in the last ten years that has yielded the notable decrease of C. diff infection rates in healthcare facilities?

In unsurprising news, the answer is not antibiotics. Healthcare practitioners deliberately limited the amount of unnecessary antibiotics prescribed and instead focused on cleaning and implementing new infection protocols aimed at controlling the spread of C. diff. These changes are also beneficial in lowering rates of other antibiotic-resistant infections and the number of diarrheal deaths in the U.S. overall.

Yet C. Diff Remains a Major Health Concern

Despite that, death rates from infections caused by this particular bacteria are still reaching dangerous and expensive levels. The number of deaths from C. diff infections rose from 3,000 to 14,000 in a period of 7 years, and. As repeated antibiotic use has left us with the hardiest specimens of an already hardy bacteria, the need for personal responsibility in managing C. diff is greater than ever.

Following the example of the healthcare system and restricting

unnecessary (or all, if possible) antibiotics while applying best hygiene practices, but these new hospital cleanliness procedures are only a piece of the puzzle in dealing with C. diff and other bacterial infections effectively (spoiler alert: more produce helps!). They are also a piece of the puzzle that will be difficult for the average person to replicate. But there are other ways to reduce the chance of infection developing due to rampant C. diff.

The Strong Survive

It's simplistic to reduce the fascinating and intricate workings of the gut microbiome to good guys and bad guys, but it's useful in helping to focus on what matters the most: balance. In nursing homes, as many as half of the residents may have C. diff colonized in their gut. Since not all of those with the C. diff (bad guy) experience infection, something is halting the microbe's progress.

Enter the good guys – your beneficial microbes. Many of the people, even people living in the same facilities, house the C. diff bacteria with no infection. A resilient, opportunistic bacteria like C. diff is looking for a host it can take advantage of, and a body dealing with a toxic overload with depleted beneficial bacteria is an easy target. Cultivating those microbes by consuming fresh, raw, organic produce and eliminating processed, artificially produced food are the best and most necessary ways to build your body's natural defenses.

Recommended Reading:

- *How to Cure Lyme Disease and Virtually Any Other Bacterial Infection, Naturally*
- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *How to Detoxify and Heal the Lymphatic System*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*

Sources:

- *Diff Infections Are Falling, Thanks To Better Cleaning And Fewer Antibiotics* – NPR
- *Bacteria Resistant to All Available Antibiotics has Claimed Its First Victim* – Organic Lifestyle Magazine
- *Antibiotic Side Effects Are Contagious – C. Diff Infections Are On The Rise* – Organic Lifestyle Magazine
- *Vital Signs: Preventing Clostridium difficile Infections* – CDC.gov