



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# GDH Positive Result

Issued by Infection Control Team

## What does GDH positive mean?

GDH is the abbreviation for 'glutamate dehydrogenase'. This is an enzyme or chemical which can be found in diarrhoea. It is typically produced by a bacteria (bug) called *Clostridium difficile* (*C.difficile*).

Testing for *C.difficile* on stool specimens incorporates an initial screen to detect the presence of this enzyme and if found the result is termed 'GDH positive'. A further test is then carried out to determine the presence of *C.difficile* toxins within the stool.

This complies with the current guidance on testing for *C.difficile* recommended by the Department of Health.

## What does this mean to me?

If you have a GDH positive result, this means that your large bowel is colonised (home to) *C.difficile* bacteria. If you do not have the toxins detected then it is unlikely that you have *C.difficile* infection causing your diarrhoea.

The majority of patients who "carry" *C.difficile* (i.e. have the bacteria in the stool but not the toxins) do not have any symptoms.

However rarely you may experience one or more of the following:

- Watery foul smelling diarrhoea
- Some patients may develop abdominal pain
- Some patients may develop a temperature

If you have any/all of these symptoms you may be started on antibiotic treatment effective against *C.difficile*.

## Hospital inpatients

Whilst you are in hospital you will be isolated into a single room if you have diarrhoea and for at least 48 hours after this has finished. In this situation staff will take precautions when managing your care for example wearing gloves and aprons. They will also ensure they wash their hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water.

## What happens next?

A member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team (IPC) will visit you to discuss the above and to give you a card (Clostridium difficile Infection Card/CDI card) that is to be kept by yourself and shown to any other healthcare provider that you may come into contact with in the future. This is to ensure they are aware of the GDH positive result and are vigilant if required to prescribe any other antibiotic treatment.

Should you develop symptoms of diarrhoea then please do not hesitate to inform your nurse or doctor. If you have had symptoms of diarrhoea they will also offer you the opportunity to be followed up when discharged by a member of the IPC Team to offer support and guidance.

## **Why do I need isolating?**

Although you may have no symptoms despite carrying the bacteria in your bowel/stool this may not be the case for all patients. If you are carrying this bacteria and have diarrhoea you may be contaminating the hospital environment. This exposes other patient's to your bacteria and may cause a more serious illness to others. To limit the chance of this happening we nurse you in an enclosed area for example a side room, which can be cleaned more frequently, more easily and will either have its own en-suite toilet or a personal commode.

## **How else can we prevent the spread of the bacteria?**

It is important to wash your hands with liquid soap and water especially after using the toilet or commode and before eating. Please discuss this with any visitors you may have or encourage them to speak to one of the staff. You can still have your normal visitors and for healthy people there is no risk to them from visiting you as long as they wash their hands after visiting you with soap and water.

If you have symptoms of diarrhoea your single room will be cleaned twice daily with an appropriate disinfectant. If you have previously been nursed in a bay then that area will be deep cleaned and a hydrogen peroxide vaporiser machine will be used to ensure the risk of spreading the bacteria is minimised.

Staff members will wear protective clothing for example disposable gloves and aprons when assisting you with any personal care. This is to prevent the bacteria being spread to other people.

## **What does this mean to me if I am not a hospital in-patient?**

Your GP will have sent a stool sample to be tested because you have had diarrhoea. This may have stopped in which case no further treatment may be required. However if you continue to have symptoms of diarrhoea your GP may decide to treat you with antibiotics.

You will also be contacted by a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team to offer advice/support if required. They will give you a CDI card that you should keep and show to any other healthcare provider to inform them of the GDH positive result. This will allow them to be vigilant in prescribing any other antibiotics you may require.

If you do not have any symptoms then a member of the Infection Prevention and Control Team will still contact you to discuss any support required and you will also be given the CDI card.

## **Should I still take antibiotics prescribed by my General Practitioner (GP)?**

Carrying the C.difficile bacteria in your large bowel does mean you are at an increased risk of developing C.difficile diarrhoea compared to someone who doesn't. This risk is increased if you are prescribed certain medicines especially antibiotics. This is why you should show the card you have been given to the GP or any prescriber when you see them.

Antibiotics are very important and can be life saving so you should not stop them without discussing this first with the prescriber, in this case the GP. They will make an informed choice involving you in the risks and benefits of the antibiotics and decide whether it is appropriate for you to carry on taking them.

## Contact

If you require any further information or need to speak to someone you can contact either the hospital or community infection control teams on 03 44 811 8111.



## **Alternative Formats**

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## **Other sources of information**

### **NHS 111**

### **NHS Choices**

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### **NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)**

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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