

C. difficile Infection

Prevention, diagnosis, initial and fulminant treatment, and recurrence management of C. difficile infection.

2021 ACG Clinical Guideline
Prevention, Diagnosis & Treatment of C. difficile
Kelly et al. · Am J Gastroenterol 2021;116:1124–1147

GRADE Strong Rec Conditional Rec

1 Prevention & Diagnosis

STATEMENT	GRADE
Against probiotics for primary prevention of CDI during antibiotic therapy	2 · Conditional
Against probiotics for secondary prevention of CDI recurrence	1 · Strong
Testing algorithms should combine a highly sensitive + highly specific modality to distinguish colonization from active infection	2 · Conditional

2 Treatment — Initial Episode

SEVERITY	REGIMEN	GRADE
Nonsevere	Oral vancomycin 125mg QID × 10d	1 · Strong
Nonsevere	Oral fidaxomicin 200mg BID × 10d	1 · Strong
Nonsevere, low-risk	Oral metronidazole 500mg TID × 10d — may be considered	1 · Strong
Severe	Oral vancomycin 125mg QID × 10d	1 · Strong
Severe	Oral fidaxomicin 200mg BID × 10d	2 · Conditional

3 Fulminant CDI

- 1

Volume resuscitation + oral vancomycin 500mg q6h for first 48–72h; consider adding parenteral metronidazole 500mg q8h as combination therapy.
- 2

With ileus: add vancomycin enemas (500mg q6h).
- 1

Consider FMT for severe/fulminant CDI refractory to antibiotics, particularly poor surgical candidates.

4 First Recurrence

STATEMENT	GRADE
Tapering/pulsed vancomycin after first recurrence following fidaxomicin, vancomycin, or metronidazole	1 · Strong
Fidaxomicin after first recurrence following vancomycin or metronidazole	2 · Conditional

5 Prevention of Further Recurrence

STATEMENT	GRADE
FMT for second or further recurrence	1 · Strong
FMT delivery: colonoscopy or capsules preferred; enema if other methods unavailable	1 / 2
Repeat FMT if recurrence within 8 weeks of initial FMT	2 · Conditional
Suppressive oral vancomycin if not an FMT candidate, relapsed after FMT, or needing frequent antibiotics	2 · Conditional
Vancomycin prophylaxis during future systemic antibiotics if high recurrence risk	2 · Conditional
Bezlotoxumab for recurrence prevention in high-risk patients	2 · Conditional
Against discontinuing antisecretory therapy in CDI patients if there is an appropriate indication	1 · Strong

6 Special Population — Inflammatory Bowel Disease

STATEMENT	GRADE
C. difficile testing in IBD patients presenting with an acute flare and diarrhea	1 · Strong
Vancomycin 125mg QID for ≥14 days in IBD patients with CDI	1 · Strong
FMT should be considered for recurrent CDI in IBD patients	1 · Strong