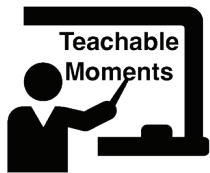


The Case of the Resident With *C. difficile*

Improving Skin Care and MDRO Prevention in Long-Term Care



The Case

An 82-year-old resident with a *Clostridioides difficile* infection and active diarrhea needs a bed bath.



The Challenge

During the bed bath, the resident is incontinent of liquid stool and accidentally wipes some stool on the tray table. The certified nursing assistant (CNA) cleans up the resident and completes the bath. Then she uses some of the water and cloths from the rinse basin to clean the bedside table.

The Error

The CNA puts the call button and water jug within reach of the resident, adjusts the bed rail, pulls back the curtain, removes her gown and gloves, and then washes her hands with soap and water before leaving the room.

Knowledge Check Questions

<p>1. Which of the following were errors by the CNA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. She used water from the rinse basin to clean the bedside table. B. She did not disinfect the table after cleaning it. C. She did not remove her gloves, perform hand hygiene, and put on new gloves before placing objects on the bedside table and or touching high-touch surfaces. D. All of the above. 	<p>Rationale for #1</p> <p>All of the answers. The rinse basin has dirty water with <i>C. difficile</i> spores from the resident's skin and from stool. Using this water to clean spreads spores. The bedside table needs to be disinfected with a sporicidal agent. Because the CNA's gloves are contaminated with <i>C. difficile</i> spores, she needs to remove her gloves, wash her hands with soap and water, and put on new gloves before touching high-touch surfaces (like the water jug, call button, bed rail, and bedside curtain). If soap and water are not available to the CNA in the resident's room, she could perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before putting on new gloves. She could then remove her gown and gloves upon leaving the room and then go wash her hand with soap and water.</p>	<p>Bonus Question: Why is hand washing required after care of residents with <i>C. difficile</i>?</p> <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>C. difficile</i> forms spores that are hard to remove from skin. Hand washing is most effective to prevent <i>C. difficile</i> transmission. Vigorous hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds is particularly important when caring for residents with <i>C. difficile</i>.</p> <p>AHRQ Pub. No. 25(26)-0066 October 2025</p>
<p>2. Check all the surfaces that could be contaminated with spores due to the CNA's errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Water Jug B. Bedside tray table C. Call button D. Bed rail E. Curtain 	<p>Rationale for #2</p> <p>All of the answers. When the CNA fails to remove her contaminated gloves and wash her hands after completing the bath, the CNA potentially spreads <i>C. difficile</i> spores to several surfaces. Remember to pause, remove your gloves, and perform hand hygiene after providing direct care to a resident before touching anything else in the room.</p>	
<p>3. When the CNA wiped feces off the tray table with wet cloths, was she cleaning or disinfecting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Cleaning and disinfecting B. Cleaning only C. Disinfecting only 	<p>Rationale for #3</p> <p>B. Cleaning only. The CNA removes visible soil from the tray table. Since the CNA did not choose a proper disinfectant that targets <i>C. difficile</i>, apply the disinfectant, and wait for the correct contact time before wiping up the disinfectant, the tray table is still contaminated with the infectious pathogen.</p>	

Answers to the Knowledge Check: 1-D; 2-A, B, C, D, and E; 3-B

