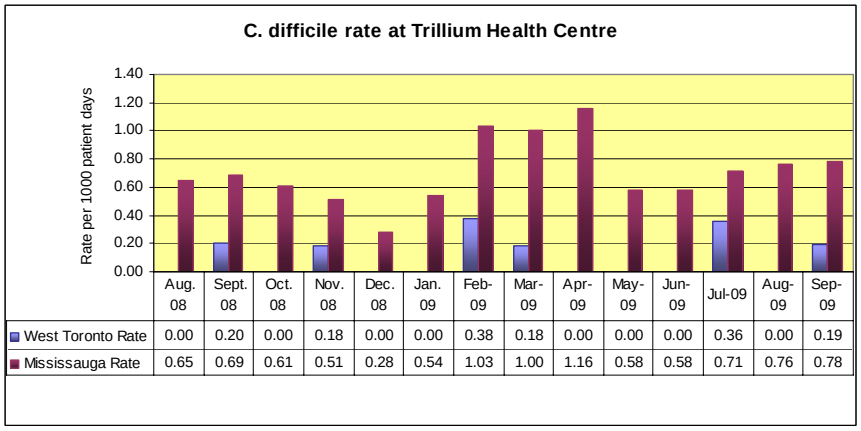
# *C. difficile* Rate – September 2009

| Trillium-West Toronto | April 2009 | May 2009 | June 2009 | July 2009 | Aug 2009 | Sept 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of new cases | 0 | 0 | 0 | <10 | 0 | <10 |
| Rate per 1000 patient days | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.36 | 0.00 | 0.19 |
| **Trillium-Mississauga** | **April 2009** | **May 2009** | **June 2009** | **July 2009** | **Aug 2009** | **Sept 2009** |
| Number of new cases | 20 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 13 |
| Rate per 1000 patient days | 1.16 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.71 | 0.76 | 0.78 |




C. difficile rate is calculated as a rate per 1,000 patient days

## Trillium's Comprehensive *C. difficile* Action Plan

Since March 2007, Trillium focused on reducing infection rates by implementing a comprehensive - and continuing - infection prevention and control action plan which includes:

- Adherence to hand washing protocols and best practices, ongoing education for staff, physicians and volunteers and additional hand sanitation dispensers
- Enhanced environmental cleaning by implementing quality audits, checklists, new products and additional training/education
- Development and implementation of a new order set for management of patients presenting with diarrhea and suspect or confirmed *C. difficile*
- Antibiotic Stewardship and best practices for the use of antibiotics
- Installation of Vernicare disposable toileting systems in key inpatient units
- Improved communication for patient flow management and improved patient care processes
- Educating patients, families and visitors about proper hand washing, including publishing a pamphlet for patients entitled, "What You Need To Know About Antibiotic-Associated Diarrhea"

With ongoing attention to maintaining strict hand hygiene practices, we are confident that we can maintain our safe environment for patients, their families and friends, and for all staff, physicians and volunteers.

For more information:
The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is reporting all Ontario hospitals' *C. difficile* information at www.ontario.ca/patientsafety.

To contact Trillium Health Centre:
publicrelations@thc.on.ca

**What is *C. difficile?***
*C. difficile* (Clostridium difficile) is a bacteria. *C. difficile* can be part of the normal bacteria in the large intestine and is one of the many bacteria that can be found in stool (a bowel movement).

*C. difficile* infection occurs when other good bacteria in the bowel are eliminated or decreased allowing the *C. difficile* bacteria to grow and produce toxin. The toxin produced can damage the bowel and cause diarrhea. *C. difficile* is one example of a hospital-acquired infection and is one of the most common infections found in hospitals and long-term care facilities. *C. difficile* has been a known cause of health care associated diarrhea for about 30 years.

**Who is at risk for *C. difficile*?**
Healthy people are not usually susceptible to *C. difficile*. Seniors, and people who have other illnesses or conditions being treated with antibiotics and certain other stomach medications, are at greater risk of an infection from *C. difficile*.

**What are the symptoms of *C. difficile*?**
The usual symptoms are mild but can be severe. Main symptoms are watery diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain /tenderness. In some cases there may not be diarrhea. Blood may or may not be present in the stools.

**How do you get *C. difficile*?**
*C. difficile* is the most common cause of hospital associated infectious diarrhea. Since it can be part of the normal bacteria that live in the large intestine, taking antibiotics can change the normal balance of bacteria in your large intestine making it easier for *C. difficile* to grow and cause an infection. Old age and the presence of other serious illnesses may increase the risk of *C. difficile* disease.

**How does *C. difficile* spread?**
The spread of *C. difficile* occurs due to inadequate hand hygiene and environmental cleaning; therefore, proper control is achieved through consistent hand hygiene and thorough cleaning of the patient environment. Good hand hygiene i.e. washing hands thoroughly and often is the single-most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases like *C. difficile*.