UNDERSTANDING POST-INFECTIOUS IBS

FOR C. DIFF SURVIVORS

PEGGY LILLIS FOUNDATION
FOR C. DIFF EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

After your C. diff infection is resolved, you may still experience symptoms in your gut.



C. diff infections, and the treatments you take to resolve them, can do enough damage to the gut to result in a new condition called **post-infectious irritable bowel syndrome (PI-IBS)**. PI-IBS can be caused by a disruption to the bacteria in your gut, irritation of your intestinal lining, and an increase in the sensitivity of nerves in the intestines.

The symptoms of PI-IBS include abdominal pain or cramps, gas and bloating, and diarrhea and/or constipation–but PI-IBS is **different** from an active C. diff infection.

POST-INFECTIOUS IBS vs. C. DIFF INFECTION

IF YOU HAVE **PI-IBS,** YOU MIGHT...

- Feel well aside from your gastrointestinal (gut) symptoms
- Have symptoms that vary from day to day
- Have symptoms that are affected by eating in general, or by certain kinds of foods
- Have recently tested negative for active C. diff toxin(s)*

BUT IF YOU HAVE A **C. DIFF INFECTION,** YOU PROBABLY...

- Feel ill (fever, chills, nausea) in addition to your gut symptoms
- Have diarrhea that suddenly becomes watery and frequent
- Have symptoms that get rapidly worse
- Notice blood in your stool, or feel severe pain
- Show worsening kidney function, or an increase in your white blood cell count*

*Require tests done by a medical professional.

MANAGING PI-IBS

For more information about C. diff and PI-IBS, visit **cdiff.org/for-patients** or scan the QR code here:

Remember that **it takes time, sometimes months, to heal** from a C. diff infection.

You can introduce strategies to manage your symptoms over time. Talk to your doctor before you make any changes to your diet or medications, and pay attention to what helps you the most.

DIET AND NUTRITION

You can try...

soluble fiber supplements, a low FODMAP diet, and probiotics and fermented foods.

It might help to avoid...

fatty foods, caffeine, alcohol, and artificial sweeteners.

You can also see a **registered dietitian** for help finding a diet that works for you.

MEDICATIONS

Depending on your symptoms, you may be able to take medications that help with the following symptoms:

- Nausea
- Gut pain
- Function of intestinal muscles
- Diarrhea
- Constipation

Remember that PI-IBS is different from C. diff, so it **shouldn't be treated with antibiotics.**

You should seek medical care if you experience any of the following symptoms, because these may be caused by something other than post-infectious IBS:

- High fever, usually defined as a temperature above 103°F (39.4°C)
- Blood in the stool
- Severe or worsening abdominal pain
- Frequent, watery diarrhea (more than 3 times per day, for more than 2 days)
- Signs of dehydration
- Weight loss that can't be explained by factors like diet, exercise, or other illnesses

PRODUCED BY **PEGGY LILLIS FOUNDATION**
WITH AN EDUCATIONAL GRANT PROVIDED BY Nestlé HealthScience®