

## MDS Alert

### Reader Question: Catch this New Name for Common Bacterium

**Question:** I don't often think about the full name of C. diff but with all of the new infection control and antibiotic usage evaluation stuff going on, I feel like I should know what it stands for, in case I encounter the bacteria or the name. Can you refresh my memory?

Texas Subscriber

**Answer:** As you probably know, C. diff causes infectious diarrhea and can cause epidemics in nursing facilities. Until recently, C. diff stood for *Clostridium difficile*, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now calling the same bacterium *Clostridioides difficile*.

The change was made after various scientific processes revealed that the structure of C. diff bacteria is actually not representative of the genus *Clostridium*, and the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) suggested making the change.

Initially, another genus and name were proposed, but the administrative costs of entirely changing the name of one of the most common infections and most widely known organism were considered astronomical, and the genus suggestion was adjusted so the currently used abbreviations of "C. diff" or "C. difficile" could still be used.