DEAR CAREGIVERS--THE KEY TO PREVENTING C. DIFF:

Cleaning the hospital environment, educating personnel about C. diff, and controlling antibiotic use are essential to meet the C. diff challenge. But in addition, hospitals and nursing homes need to focus on a largely NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY TO PREVENT C. DIFF: patient hand hygiene.

Sometimes contaminated medical devices are to blame for C. diff, but more often patients give themselves C. diff. They touch contaminated surroundings, pick up the spores on their hands, and then touch their lips or pick up food and swallow the spores along with the food.

RID's Fifteen Steps that patients can take to reduce their infection risk include this advice: "Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your hands to your mouth, and do not set food or utensils on furniture or bed sheets." But many patients need help cleaning their hands and unfortunately don't get it. They also need a reminder, especially at mealtime.

RID has printed tent cards for meal trays available in many languages. The cards say "Please clean your hands before enjoying this meal and avoid putting your utensils on any surface except your plate."

We'd like to work with you to provide patients with the reminders and the help they need to keep their hands clean, including towlettes on their meal trays.

And we are looking for opportunities to measure the positive impact of this strategy on C. diff infection rates.

Please contact us to partner in this important effort.
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