

## Sandpits a 'reservoir' for nasty superbugs

Sand play pits harbour a superbug that causes stomach upsets and diarrhoea and in rare cases damages the gut, a new study found.

More than half of all sandpits for children and pets tested were swarming with the bacteria *Clostridium difficile*, also known as C. diff. And worryingly scientists found genetically diverse strains including ones displaying increased toxin production, and in some cases multidrug resistance.

C. Diff causes diarrhoea, painful stomach cramps, nausea, dehydration, a fever and loss of appetite and weight. Serious infections may require surgery to remove a damaged section of bowel.

The latest finding was over double the amount of found in soil in parks, gardens and playgrounds in Cardiff in 1996 when it was found in a fifth of samples. Prof José Blanco of the Complutense University of Madrid said: "The soil of playgrounds is a reservoir of diverse parasites and infectious agents."