

Date: 3/18/25

Effective Date: 3/22/25

Title: C. difficile Algorithm Update

Test: C. difficile PCR

Explanation:

Positive C. difficile PCR tests will automatically have C. difficile toxin immunoassay testing performed.

The C. difficile PCR test identifies the presence of C difficile DNA (toxin B gene) but does not distinguish between active infection and asymptomatic colonization. The toxin immunoassay identifies toxin production. Using this test protocol to provide both the PCR and toxin results can help clinicians better distinguish between active infection and asymptomatic colonization and may reduce unnecessary treatment of colonized patients.

To further ensure appropriate test utilization, inpatient providers will be required to fill out the following questions when placing a C. difficile PCR order:

Reason for testing within 30 days of a positive or 7 days of a negative result

None  Urgent Exception

! Explanation of Urgent Exception

Ileus  Toxic Megacolon  IBD

Comments: [+ Add Comments](#)

Specimen Type: **Stool**

Specimen Source: **Per Rectum**


Add-on: No add-on specimen found

Process Instructions: PCR tests can return false positives for patients who are colonized with C. diff, which can lead to incorrect diagnosis, prolonged length of stay, and worse patient outcomes.

To reduce patient harm, only test for C. diff when patients meet criteria.

Please consult an Infectious Diseases provider if you're unsure if testing is appropriate.

Please contact the Microbiology Lab at (607)274-4474 with any questions.

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Laurie Mas, Microbiology Manager  
Elizabeth Plocharczyk, MD

**MAR 19 2025**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Medical Director or Designee