**Testing Criteria for C. difficile**

The patient should meet all four criteria below:

1. Has persistent, frequent watery stools (>3 per 24h) for a duration of >24 hours  
   **Implement Contact Precautions**
2. Has one or more Risk Factor for CDI (page 2)
3. Is not on laxatives, stool softeners, tube feeds, or medications with diarrhea as a known side effect (prior 24-48 hours)
4. Diarrhea cannot be otherwise explained by treatment or condition (IBS, pancreatic cancer, liquid diet)

**To improve use of diagnostic testing consider these process changes:**

1. Physician approval for test
2. No standing orders for C. diff testing. IF DIARRHEA RESOLVES DO NOT TEST
3. Lab should reject specimens that don’t meet criteria for clinical diarrhea (conform to container, Bristol >5)

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**Should we test for cure? NO**

Occasionally, nursing homes will request one or more negative stool tests for *Clostridium difficile* Infection (CDI) prior to allowing a resident to be admitted to the facility.

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**References**

C. difficile Testing Guidance

Risk Factors

- Antibiotics or gastric acid suppression in last 30 days
- GI procedure in last 30 days
- Long hospital stay (>7 days)
- Nursing home stay in last 3 months
- History of C. difficile in last 30 days
- Acute onset of abdominal pain/cramping
- Decreased appetite or anorexia
- Acute change from baseline or trajectory of recovery (fever, increased WBCs)

Clinically Significant Diarrhea

- persistent, frequent watery stools (≥ 3 per 24 hours)

Has patient been given laxatives in the last 24-48 hours?

- NO
  - Observe for 24 hours to assess for persistence of symptoms.
  - DO NOT ORDER C.DIFF TEST
- YES
  - INITIATE CONTACT PRECAUTIONS
  - Consider Testing

Stop laxative and monitor clinical response over 24-48 hours prior to ordering test

This guidance is not a substitute for clinical judgment. If suspicion of severe C. difficile associated colitis, prompt initiation of empiric therapy by physician while test is pending may be warranted.

Adapted from the Baylor Scott & White Health C. difficile testing guidance.