

**Questions? Consult Infection Control: 443-2644**

**DIARRHEA**  
 ≥ 3 unformed stools in ≤ 24 hours

\* From the lab manual re *C. difficile* testing: "Only liquid or unformed stools will be accepted. Assays should be ordered only on patients who manifest persistent diarrhea, have recently received antimicrobial or antiviral therapy, and are not receiving stool softening agents."  
**REMEMBER: "If it ain't loose, the test is of no use"**

Initiate and Document **CONTACT PRECAUTIONS** for patient with **DIARRHEA** (No MD order required)

patient < 1 year old

**Contact Precautions until diarrhea resolves**

patient ≥ 1 year old

Admitted < 3 days ago?

Admitted ≥ 3 days ago?

MD: Consider testing for infectious etiologies:  
 • Bacterial  
 • Viral  
 • Parasitic  
 • *C. difficile*\* if pt has hx of antibiotic use  
 See branch below for patients with known **chronic diarrhea**

**NEGATIVE**  
 Includes result: "NEGATIVE toxin assay. Positive somatic antigen assay. (Interpretation: NEGATIVE TEST - not consistent with *C. difficile* induced disease.)"  
**(Maintain Contact Precautions until results are FINAL)**

• Send ONE stool for *C. difficile* test\*  
 • Pediatric patients only: Also send ONE stool for rotavirus test

**POSITIVE**

***C. difficile* positive:** Continue precautions until **diarrhea** resolves\*\*.  
**Rotavirus positive:** Continue Contact Precautions for duration of hospitalization or until **diarrhea** resolves and one rotavirus test is negative.

Consult [Isolation Precautions](#) table for specific organism isolated for precautions discontinuation criteria

**POSITIVE**

**Has diarrhea resolved? \*\***  
 (e.g. patient does not meet the above definition of **diarrhea**)

**NO**

**YES**

Has patient been on antibiotics in the past 6 weeks?

**NO**

Is patient on lactulose OR chemotherapy?

**NO**

Consult Infection Control: 443-2644

**YES - continuing OR chronic diarrhea \*\***

• **D/C precautions and retest weekly** for *C. difficile* (and rotavirus for pediatric patients) - no isolation required while tests are negative  
 • **Reinstitute Contact Precautions and retest** if significant clinical change  
 • **Reinstate Contact Precautions** if stool becomes positive for *C. difficile* or rotavirus.

**YES**

**May D/C Precautions (No MD order required)**

**\*\* If diarrhea resolves and then begins anew, place patient in Contact Precautions and begin diarrhea decision tree again.**