



CDI Lab Testing Protocol Template

Purpose:

To establish a protocol for ordering *Clostridium difficile* (CDI) lab tests; collecting and transporting stool samples; placing patients on contact precautions; and repeat testing.

Protocol:

I. When to Order CDI Test

A. Suspect CDI if:

1. The patient has had 3 or more diarrheal stools in a 24-hour period
2. The patient has received antibiotics in the last 12 weeks

II. Sample Collection and Transport

- A. Only diarrheal or unformed stools (stools that take the shape of the container they are in) should be tested for CDI unless ileus due to CDI is suspected.
- B. Specimens should be submitted in a clean watertight container.
- C. Transport media is not necessary as it may increase the likelihood of a false positive.
- D. Specimens should be transported as soon as possible and stored at 2°C to 8°C until tested.

III. When to Place Patient on Contact Precaution

- A. Practice presumptive isolation of patients with 3 or more unformed stools within a 24 hour period.
- B. If presumptive isolation was not done, rapidly report and implement isolation for patients with positive CDI lab results.
- C. Extend use of contact precautions beyond duration of diarrhea (e.g. 48 hours).
- D. If you have a positive test, repeat testing should not be used to guide duration of isolation or treatment.

IV. Repeat Testing

- A. If positive for CDI, repeat testing should be avoided.
- B. After a negative test result, repeat testing during the same episode of diarrhea is of limited value and **should be avoided**.

References:

1. APIC Elimination Guide. Guide to the Elimination of Clostridium difficile in Healthcare Settings. 2008.
2. Cohen, Stuart H. Et. al. SHEA-IDSa Guideline: Clinical Practice Guidelines for Clostridium difficile Infection in Adults: 2010 Update by the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology (SHEA) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSa). Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, May 2010, Vol. 31, No. 5.
3. Gould, Carolyn. CDC Commentary: Testing for Clostridium difficile Infection. Medscape Today. 2010.
4. American Academy of Pediatrics. Clostridium difficile. Red Book: 2009 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 28th ed. PP. 263-265.

Figure 1 – CDI Lab Test Protocol

