

Decision Flow-Chart for Diarrhea

Assessment

- Normal stool pattern? What is the consistency of their normal stool pattern?
- Have they started bowel regimen with use of laxative or stool softeners?
- Frequency of bowel movements?
- When and how did illness begin – abrupt or gradual?
- Associated symptoms i.e. nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, cramps, headache etc. ?
- Fever, blood, or pus in stool?

Patient has had **≥3 unformed stools in 24 hrs** and is **NOT** on a bowel regimen and unformed stool is not a part of their normal stooling pattern.

Patient has loose stool **AND** on a bowel regimen or this is part of their normal stooling pattern

C. difficile usually not indicated

Patient has diarrhea of unknown etiology, Place on **Modified Contact**

Testing may be considered if patient has signs/symptoms (i.e. Fever unknown origin, ↑WBC, etc.)








Send sample for **C. difficile testing**
(sample must conform to the shape of the container)

Positive**

Negative

Keep patient on **Modified Contact Precautions** until patient has had formed stools for 48 hours *

Patient will remain on **Modified Contact Precautions** for non-C.difficile diarrhea until infectious etiology has been ruled out.

Bristol Stool Scale		
Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely liquid

*Testing the stool of asymptomatic patients, testing for cure, or retesting after a previous positive during the same admission is not recommended. If severe recurrent C.diff is suspected, an Infectious Disease consultation may be indicated. Check with the provider.

**The Antimicrobial Stewardship team has developed an evidence based C.diff treatment order set.

Refer to the Isolation Policy for further instructions or contact Infection Prevention