**Diarrhea Decision Tree**

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

- Initiate and document Contact Isolation Precautions for patient with DIARRHEA

**ACTION:** Maintain Contact Isolation Precautions until results are FINAL

**Negative for C. difficile**

- **Positive**
  - C. difficile POSITIVE: Continue precautions until diarrhea resolves **— DO NOT RETEST—**
  - Rotavirus positive: Continue Contact Precautions for duration of hospitalization or until diarrhea resolves and one rotavirus test is negative
  - Other positives, consult Isolation Precautions table

- **Negative**
  - Has diarrhea resolved? **— DO NOT RETEST—**
    - ≥3 unformed stools in ≤ 24 hours
    - **Positive**
      - 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
    - **Negative**
      - Has patient been on antibiotics in the past 6 weeks? **— continuing OR chronic diarrhea**
      - **Positive**
        - Consult Infection Control: 555-5555
      - **Negative**
        - Is patient on lactulose OR chemotherapy? **— YES**
          - May D/C Precautions (No MD order required)
          - Age < 1yr

))[Admitted ≥3 days ago & age ≥ 1 yr]

**NOTES:**

1. **— IF diarrhea resolves and begins anew, place patient in contact isolation precautions and begin diarrhea decision tree again.**
2. **C. difficile testing:** Only liquid or unformed stools should be tested.
3. **If tests for C. difficile and C. difficile toxin are positive, it is likely that the person’s diarrhea and related symptoms are due to the presence of toxin-producing C. difficile.**
4. **A positive result for C. difficile bacteria or C. difficile antigen but a negative C. difficile toxin result means that the bacteria are present in the digestive tract but are not producing a detectable level of toxin.**
5. **Negative test results for both the bacteria and the toxin may mean that the diarrhea and other symptoms are being caused by something other than C. difficile.**

This decision tree has been adapted from the UCSF Medical Center Diarrhea Decision Tree. [http://infectioncontrol.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/Isolation/Diarrhea_Decision_Tree_Final[1].pdf](http://infectioncontrol.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/Isolation/Diarrhea_Decision_Tree_Final[1].pdf)

This material was prepared by the Great Plains Quality Innovation Network, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 11SOW-GPQIN-KS-C1-64/0415