

LABORATORY TEST ALERT

REGIONAL PATHOLOGY SERVICES

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

July 2009

Test: *Clostridium difficile* Toxin, Stool

SPECIMEN REQUIRED

Collect	Fresh liquid stool collected in a sterile container. Stool culture transport such as Cary Blair or Enteric Plus is acceptable. Recommend one specimen per day. Volume: 10.0 mLs, (1.0 mL minimum)
Transport	Transport at room temperature if < 2 hrs. Refrigerated up to 3 days. Frozen up to 1 week.
Unacceptable Condition	Stool in preservative including formalin, PVA or Protofix, rectal swabs.
Remarks	All stool specimens submitted to the laboratory for <i>C. difficile</i> testing will be subjected to simultaneous testing for GDH (Glutamate Dehydrogenase, common <i>C. difficile</i> antigen) and for <i>C. difficile</i> Toxins A&B. Recent studies show that standard <i>C. difficile</i> testing has an unacceptable high false positive rate and that a two step testing algorithm which uses antigen testing as a first step screen can improve specificity with resulting improvement in patient outcomes and decreased hospitalization costs. This change is supported by an in-house study of physician ordering practices and test results at the Nebraska Medical Center. Contact precautions can be discontinued with resolution of clinical syndrome. A repeat stool culture or toxin assay is not required to discontinue isolation. Repeat testing recommended only if symptoms persist or reoccur.
Stability	Ambient: <2 hours; Refrigerated: 3 days; Frozen: 1 week.

REFERENCE INTERVAL

Negative for *C. difficile* toxins A and B

Negative for *C. difficile* Antigen

METHODOLOGY

Enzyme Immunoassay

PERFORMED

Microbiology/The Nebraska Medical Center Laboratories
Monday-Friday received by 1000; weekend and holidays received by 1300.

REPORTED

Results same day.

CPT codes: 87449; 87324

Call Brian Lenz or Randi Nelson at Regional Pathology Services 559-6420 or 1-800-334-0459 for information about sending this test to the UNMC Laboratory.