Example – Diagnostic Algorithm

Diagnostic Algorithm for *C. difficile* Infection:

1. **Patient with clinically-significant diarrhea (3 or more loose stools per day for at least 1 to 2 days)?**
   - **NO**
   - **YES**

2. **Has patient been taking laxatives over the past 48 hours?**
   - **NO**
   - **YES**

3. Enter order for a single stool specimen to be tested for *C. difficile*. Place patient on empiric Contact Precautions while awaiting results.

4. **C. difficile test results positive?**
   - **NO**
   - **YES**

5. Continue treatment and Contact Precautions. Do not send follow up *C. difficile* test (i.e., as a test of cure)

6. **Alternative diagnosis as cause of diarrheal symptoms made?**
   - **NO**
   - **YES**

7. If *C. difficile* strongly suspected despite one negative test, a second test may be sent vs. empiric treatment for *C. difficile* Infection.