

Physician Education Express

C Difficile Testing: Yes, or No?

January 2020



Audience: Providers and Advance Providers

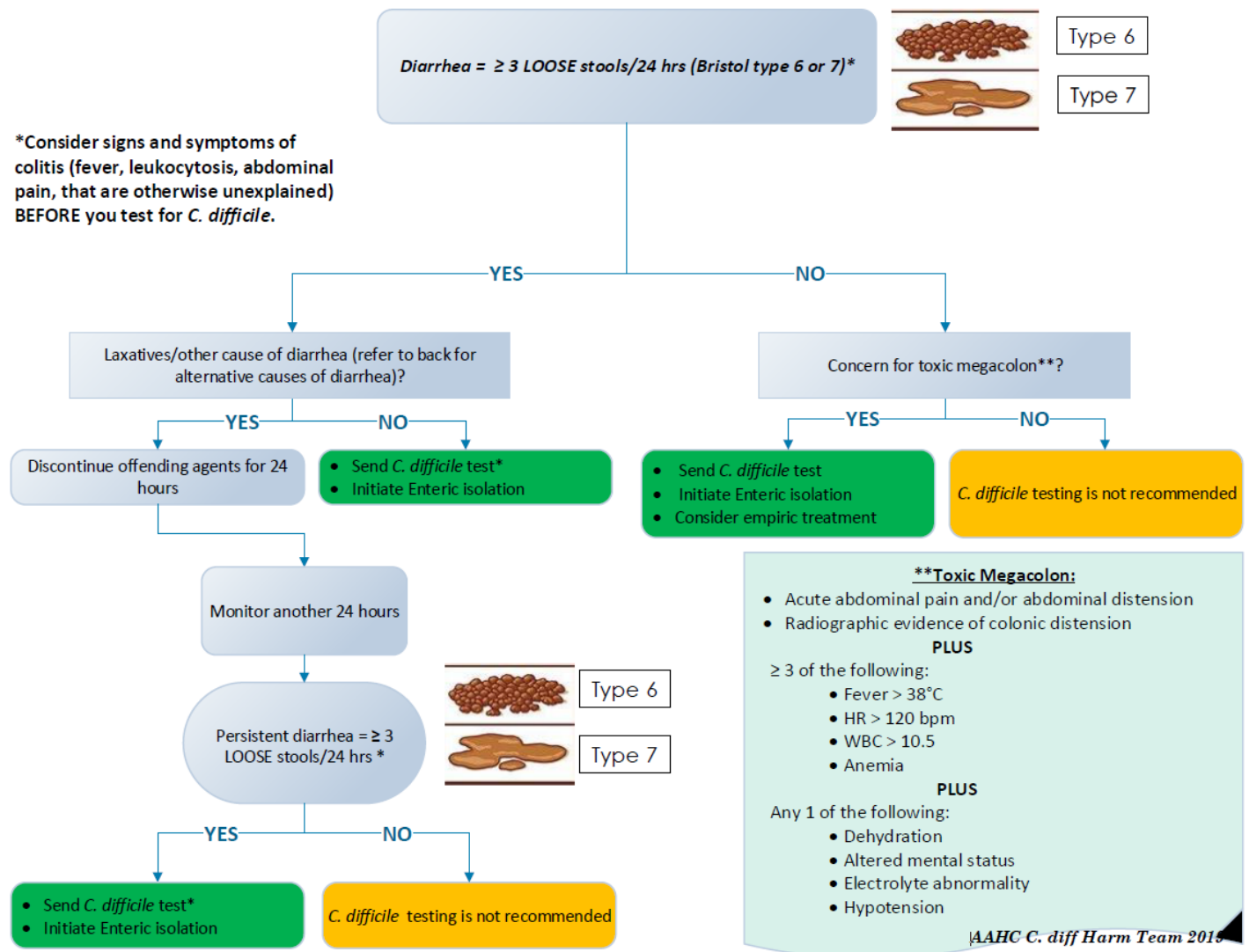
Education Level: **Yellow**

Date: January 7, 2020

SUMMARY:

Testing for *C. difficile* should be performed on patients with clinically-significant diarrhea, defined as 3 or more loose stools per day for at least 24 hours in the presence of signs and symptoms of colitis. Providers should ensure that the patient has not been administered laxatives in the prior 48 hours as a possible explanation of diarrheal symptoms.

Use the following *C. Difficile* Testing Decision aid:



Key Points

Consider signs and symptoms of colitis (fever, leukocytosis, abdominal pain, that are otherwise unexplained) BEFORE you test for *C. difficile*.

- ✓ Diarrhea = ≥ 3 LOOSE stools/24 hrs (Bristol type 6 or 7)* + unexplained leukocytosis/fever or unexplained abdominal pain
- ✓ Concern for toxic megacolon**

Do not retest patients within 7 days of a prior test: Repeat testing for *C. difficile* has not been shown to be clinically useful if performed within 7 days of a test result.