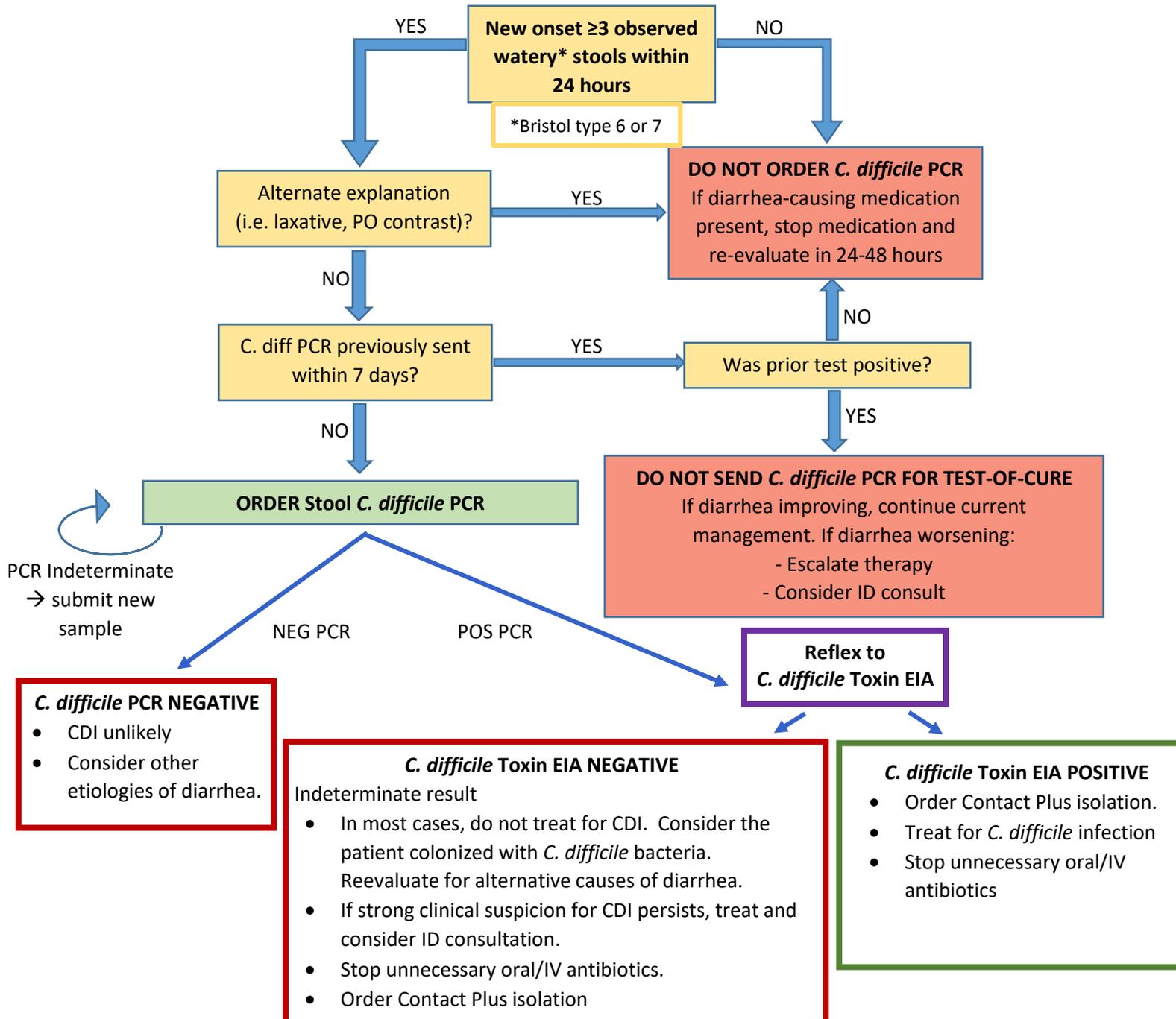


***C. difficile* Infection (CDI) Testing Algorithm: PCR/Reflex Toxin EIA (November 2023)**



Key Points:

- Identify new onset of unexplained large-volume, frequent, liquid diarrhea and consider a broad differential diagnosis. This process of medical decision-making is unchanged.
- If testing is appropriate, order “C diff PCR/reflex toxin EIA and contact precautions.”
- Avoid unnecessary testing. The first test, the *C. difficile* PCR, is a very sensitive test. C diff PCR(+) means the sample carries *C. difficile* organisms with the genetic material capable of producing toxin. A positive PCR test could mean CDI or could mean *C. difficile* colonization. The latter does not need CDI treatment.
- Reflex testing for *C. difficile* toxin EIA differentiates between CDI, which warrants treatment, and colonization, which does not.
- CDI is a toxin-mediated disease, so diarrhea in patients with *C. diff* PCR(+)/Toxin EIA(+) confirms the diagnosis of CDI. On the other hand, most patients with *C. diff* PCR(+)/Toxin(-) diarrhea do not have CDI and do not warrant CDI treatment. If strong clinical suspicion of CDI remains for a patient with a *C. diff* PCR(+)/Toxin(-) result, however, treat for CDI and consider obtaining Infectious Disease consultation. [Click here for FAQs](#)