

Appendix 2. Interpretation of a 2-step *C. difficile* testing algorithm

Step 3. Interpreting test results

The following actions should be taken depending on the test result:

Result of 2 test algorithm ¹	Interpretation	Include in mandatory reporting to HPA ²
GDH EIA (or NAAT) positive, toxin EIA positive	CDI is likely to be present	Yes
GDH EIA (or NAAT) positive, toxin EIA negative	<i>C. difficile</i> could be present, so may have transmission potential. Patient could be potential <i>C. difficile</i> excretor	No, but may be suitable for local reporting
GDH EIA (or NAAT) negative, toxin EIA positive	<i>C. difficile</i> or CDI is very unlikely to be present, so may have transmission potential. Patient could have other potential pathogens.	No

It must be remembered that no test or combination of tests is infallible and the clinical condition of the patient should always be taken into consideration when making management and treatment choices.

Source: Department of Health (2008). 'Clostridium difficile infection: How to deal with the problem'

¹ A cytotoxin assay may be considered as an alternative to a sensitive toxin EIA, but it yields slower results and this will need to be taken into account in making decisions about infection control.

² Unless a repeat sample within 28 days. Please refer to the Mandatory Surveillance Protocol for full case definition and further information.

