

# Test Update



## **Clostridium difficile Toxin Acceptable Specimen Change, Effective 10/01/2014**

Based on guidelines from the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), St. Luke's Laboratory will only accept liquid stools for C. Difficile testing.

### **IDSA Guidelines:**

- Testing for C. difficile or its toxins should be performed only in the presence of diarrhea, defined as the passage of 3 or more liquid stools in 24 or fewer consecutive hours.
- Testing asymptomatic patients, i.e. those without diarrhea is not clinically useful.
- Evaluating a formed stool for the presence of C. Difficile can decrease the specificity of diagnosis because 10 % or more of patients may be asymptomatic carriers of the organism.
- Processing a single specimen at the onset of a symptomatic episode is usually sufficient. Because of the low increase in yield and the possibility of false-positive results, routine testing of multiple specimens is not recommended.

### **Specimen/Transport Requirements:**

- Liquid stool (stools which conform to the shape of the container)
- Clean, screw cap container, refrigerated. **DO NOT FREEZE**
- Sample must be received by SLH lab within 5 days of collection

**If you have questions, please contact J. Steinhauer, Microbiology Medical Director (218-249-5749) or Microbiology Department (218-249-5319)**