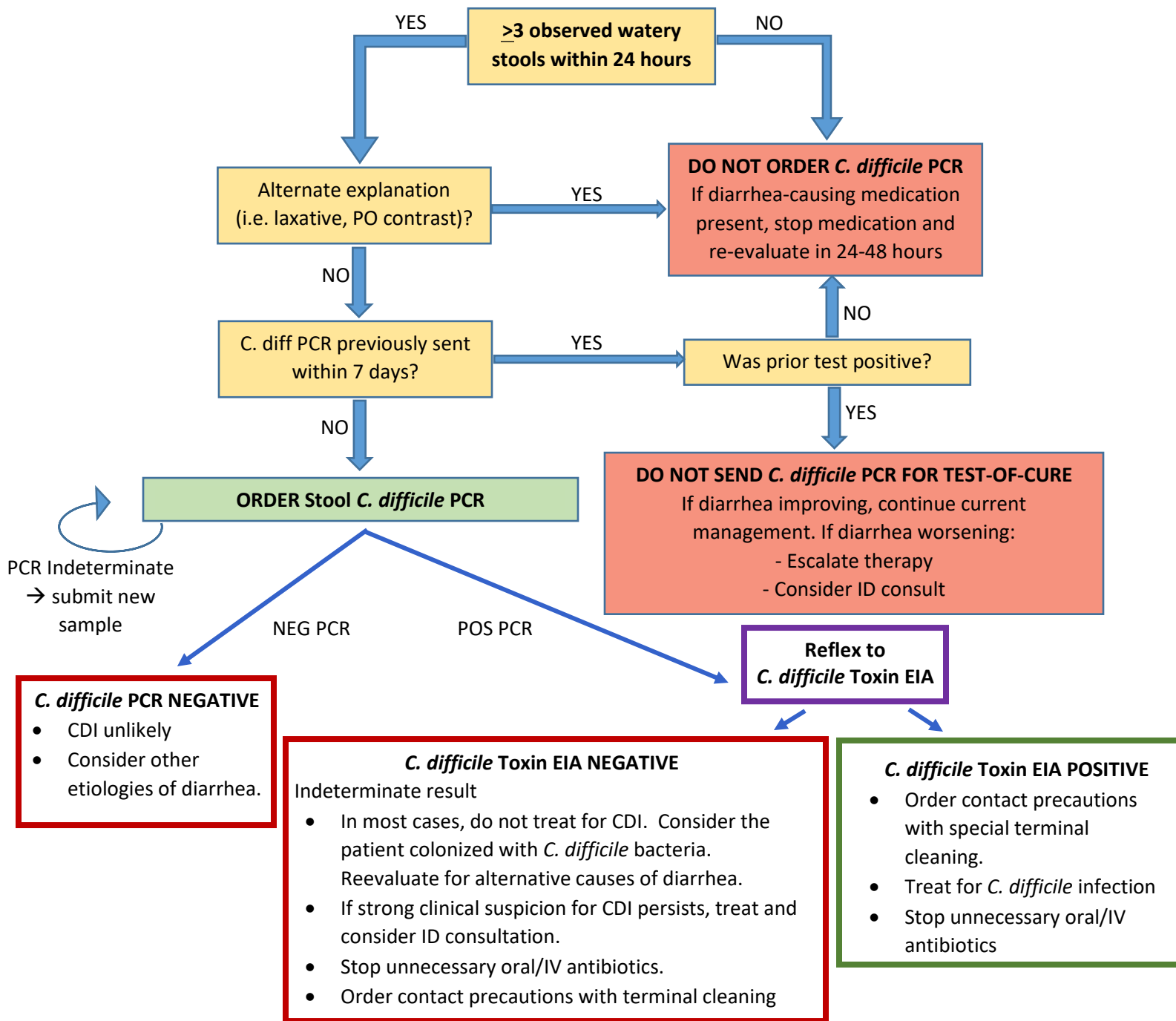


C. difficile Infection (CDI) Testing Algorithm: PCR/Reflex Toxin EIA (4/26/2021)



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 **stool C diff PCR**
- 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, diarrhea in most patients with *C. diff* PCR+/toxin (-) 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.