

OUTPATIENT GI TESTING UPDATE

Important Change in Lab Evaluation of Acute Diarrhea: 22-Target Gastrointestinal Pathogen Panel (GIP) Now a Restricted Test

Educational handout for BCH clinicians and staff

EFFECTIVE

SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Outpatient GIP orders received by the BCH laboratory will be changed per protocol to the **GI Bacterial PCR**.

Why is BCH making this change?

- Local data and recent medical literature now show that results of 22-target GIP tests in outpatients rarely changes patient management.
- Since GIP generally has a low impact on outpatient management, health insurance companies determined this assay to not be medically necessary and is no longer covered.
- BCH has tailored the GI testing algorithm to provide the most useful information at the lowest cost to the patient.
- The changes were approved by BCH Medical Leadership and more information can be found in the BCH Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidebook.

What should providers order when an infectious cause is suspected?

Select testing based on clinical presentation, symptoms and duration, and exposure history.

GI Bacterial PCR

Campylobacter, Salmonella, Shigella/EIEC, and STX-1/2

Norovirus PCR

Order separately based on clinical suspicion

C. difficile PCR

Order separately based on antibiotic and healthcare exposure

Giardia antigen

Order separately based on clinical suspicion

Ova and parasite exam (O&P)

Consider based on clinical presentation (diarrhea > =14 days), exposure history such as travel, and sometimes moderate to severe immune compromise. Typically, 3 samples are required for assessment.

EXCEPTIONS & ORDER WORKFLOW**Are there exceptions?**

Yes. The following exceptions may apply:

- Rocky Mountain Cancer Center may order the GIP per protocol.
- Moderate to Severely Immunocompromised patients
- Outbreaks
- Rarely, other circumstances

Exception approval workflow**1****Contact Infectious Disease**

The authorizing clinician should use secure chat or call the Infectious Disease doctor listed in the Person on Call app.

2**Obtain approval**

Any exception must be approved by Infectious Disease.

3**Notify the Microbiology Laboratory**

Infectious Disease will notify the Microbiology Laboratory by secure chat that the exception is approved.

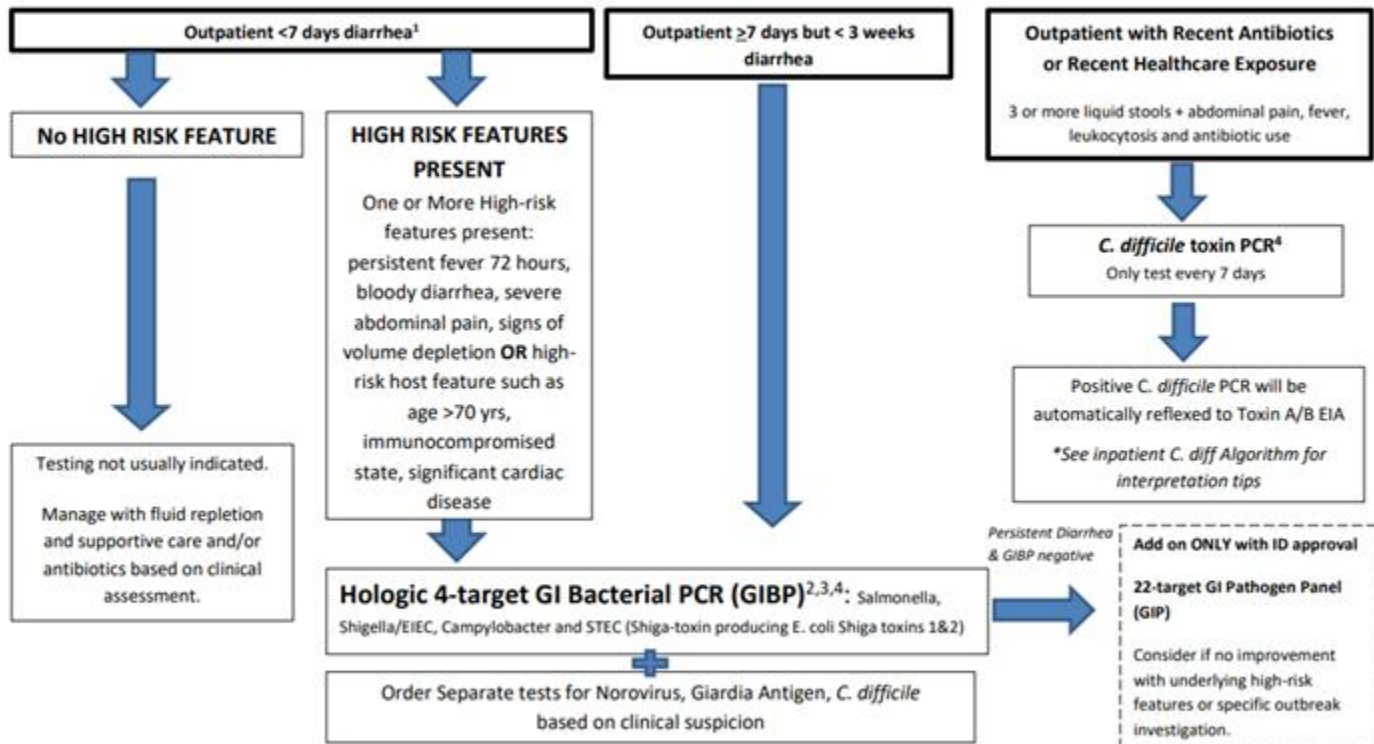
Epic may still allow the outpatient GIP order. Will the laboratory perform it?**Beginning September 15, 2026**

Any outpatient stool specimen received by the BCH laboratory with a GIP order will have the order changed per protocol to the GI Bacterial PCR.

Outpatient Acute Diarrhea Testing Algorithm

Use this algorithm with the clinical presentation, symptom duration, and exposure history.

Outpatient (Ambulatory & Urgent Care) Testing Algorithm for Acute Diarrhea (3 or more liquid stools/daily)



¹If there is public health concern (daycare, outbreak, food handlers, HCW), discuss with ID team and/or IP as testing guidance may be more liberal.

²If GIBP negative in patient with persistent diarrhea >2 weeks consider: Ova and Parasite Exam in traveler, Microsporidium and Cystoisospora belli for immunocompromised patient, non-infectious cause, and/or GI or ID Consult.

³The 22-target GI Pathogen Panel will only be available for ED, inpatient and cancer center evaluation otherwise ID approval required. Like the 22-panel testing for acute diarrhea, GIBP is not performed less than 14 days from previous sample tested. If you think it is indicated, contact ID on call for approval.

⁴GIBP or C. difficile PCR should NOT be used for test of cure.