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Parasitology Update

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In order to clarify parasitology test offering and result reporting, the following changes have been made by the Danbury Hospital Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Microbiology section.

The previous test offering of "*Ova and Parasite Screen*" has been discontinued. "**Giardia/Cryptosporidium Antigen**" is now offered. The test methodology (EIA) and reporting remains the same. It is recommended that if Giardia is suspected, and the first specimen is negative for Giardia antigen, a second specimen be submitted for antigen testing. One negative result is sufficient to rule out Cryptosporidium.

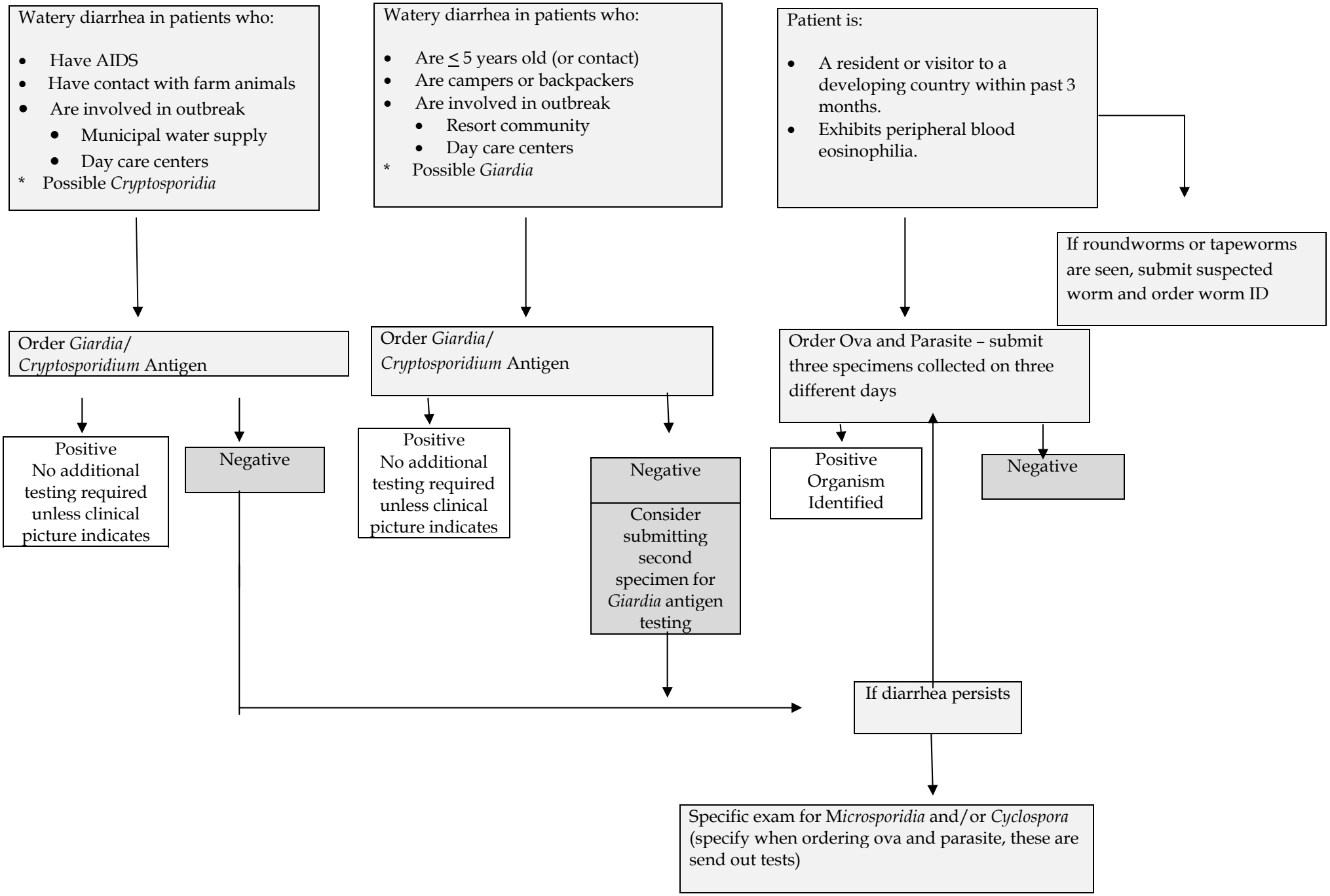
The previous test offering of "*Complete Ova and Parasite*" has been renamed "**Ova and Parasite**". This does **NOT** include a Giardia/Cryptosporidium antigen test. Test methodology and reporting remains the same. Methodology includes concentration which facilitates the recovery of protozoan cysts, helminth eggs, and larvae and a trichrome stained smear which identifies intestinal protozoa, if present. Three specimens collected on three separate days are recommended. One or more of the following criteria MUST be met for this test to be performed: 1) the patient must have lived or traveled outside of the United States within the past three months, 2) the patient has exhibited peripheral blood eosinophilia, or 3) patient does not meet either criteria but physician has consulted with the Medical Director for approval. If the patient does not meet one of the criteria, the test will be canceled and credited and a Giardia/Cryptosporidium Antigen test will be ordered and performed.

If Cyclospora or Isospora is suspected, an Ova and Parasite test should be ordered but it must be clearly indicated in the order that these parasites are suspected so that a modified acid fast preparation can be made from a concentrated specimen.

If Microsporidium is suspected, please consult the Microbiology Laboratory at x7305. The specimen will be sent to a reference lab.

The ideal specimen to submit for any of the parasite testing listed above is a stool submitted in a set of Ova and Parasite parapak containers. Each set contains two vials. One vial contains formalin and one vial contains polyvinyl alcohol (PVA). Both are preservatives. Stool should be added to the vials up to the fill line on the side of the container. Both containers must be submitted for proper evaluation. Specimens must be submitted within seven days of collection and must be properly labeled with patient name and medical record number or date of birth, and date and time of collection. Stool should not be contaminated with urine and the patient should avoid using barium, laxatives, magnesium or antidiarrheal compounds prior to collection. Specimens will be retained by the lab for seven days so that additional testing can be requested if clinically indicated and criteria are met.

If parapak containers are not available, a clean dry container may be used but the specimen must be received in the lab within two hours of collection if an aspirate or within 24 hours if not an aspirate and the specimen has been refrigerated.

For parasitic evaluation of non-stool specimens, please contact the lab at x7305 for instructions.
An algorithm is provided on the next page which may be helpful in selecting the most appropriate test.
Questions may be directed to Microbiology at 203-739-7305 or to Dr. Jessica Dodge, Medical Director, at 203-739-7034.

PARASITIC INVESTIGATION OF STOOL SPECIMENS ALGORITHM