

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) GI Presentation and Guidelines

GI symptoms may be present in COVID-19 infection. Rarely (<3%), GI symptoms are the only presenting complaint. This poses a risk to healthcare workers. Rotavirus, norovirus, sapovirus and other causes of community associated diarrhea are still prevalent and can cause illness in the population. A rational guideline to both diagnose COVID-19 early and preserve PPE is warranted.

Protocol for gastroenteritis modified for COVID-19:

1. All new gastroenteritis symptoms, place in contact/droplet precautions. Assess for COVID-19 exposures (healthcare worker, contact with case, travel to endemic area, family member).
2. Order **GIPCR plus Cdiff EIA** for patients with gastroenteritis symptoms (nausea/vomiting/diarrhea). Turnaround time is usually less than 24hrs.
3. If positive, then remove from droplet (retain contact) precautions and treat the identified illness.
4. **If negative, test for COVID-19**, and keep in droplet/contact until test results return.
5. Placement in a COVID-19 unit as presumed gastroenteritis patient can be considered based on exposure history. If COVID-19 seems most likely, then can consider.