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## **Fact Sheet: How NASPGHAN Develops Clinical Practice Guidelines**

For many years, the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) has published evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to promote and improve the care of pediatric patients with digestive disorders. Towards this end, in 1997, NASPGHAN adopted rigorous standards that apply to the development of all clinical practice guidelines published by the Society.

Based on a similar approach used by the American Academy of Pediatrics, NASPGHAN follows the following steps in developing and publishing all of its practice guidelines:

1. NASPGHAN identifies a disorder where the likelihood of a change in management of the disorder will significantly improve patient care.
2. NASPGHAN then convenes a special guidelines committee, selecting members on the basis of their expertise in the field. The committee must include primary care physicians and specialists in clinical epidemiology and pediatric gastroenterology.
3. The guidelines committee defines the problem to be addressed, the type of patients for whom the guidelines will apply, the diagnostic and therapeutic interventions to be considered, the practice setting, and the target population of health care providers that need to be reached (e.g. primary care, specialists, nurses)
4. The committee develops a step-by-step process by which a patient would be managed based on current knowledge and experience. The process is forms the basis for a rigorous search of the medical literature.
5. Based on an extensive review of the published, peer- reviewed literature, the committee develops recommendations on patient management, using a process known as the Nominal Group Technique to achieve consensus. As part of this process, minutes are kept regarding all discussions and votes.
6. Once the committee has reached consensus, it develops a draft document that must be reviewed by all committee members. Once a satisfactory draft is completed, the draft is sent to as many as 50 primary care, pediatric gastroenterology and other pediatric specialists for review. After incorporating any further edits and comments, a final draft is sent to the entire NASPGHAN membership for review and comment.
7. The final step in the process is for the NASPGHAN Executive Council to review and approve the guidelines. Guidelines have also received the endorsement of the governing board of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
8. Once all these steps are taken, NASPGHAN publishes the guidelines in the *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition* and posts the guidelines on the NASPGHAN Web site.

This rigorous process produces an objective, practical and useful clinical practice guideline. To date, NASPGHAN has used this process to publish six separate evidence-based practice guidelines covering the management of pediatric GI disorders.

***The mission of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition is to be a world leader in advancing the science and clinical practice of pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition in health and disease***