

From the Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Michael McBride**



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9076 5615  
Fax: 028 90523206  
E-mail: [sgu-  
niceguidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:sgu-niceguidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 08/09 CG 61**

Chief Executives of HSS Boards – **for distribution to:**

Directors of Public Health  
Directors of Nursing  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services  
Directors of Primary Care – for cascade to prescribing and GP  
Advisors

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**

Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant  
staff

Date: 21 January 2009

General Practitioners

HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information**

Chairs of HSS Boards  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority  
Chief Officers HSC Councils  
Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA  
Chief Executive, NIPPET  
Chief Executive, NIPEC  
Chief Executive, RMSC

Dear Colleagues

**NICE Clinical Guideline No 61 – Irritable Bowel Syndrome**

The advice in the NICE guideline covers the care of adults with irritable bowel syndrome, including:

- the support, treatment and advice people should be offered by their GP in diagnosing and helping to manage their irritable bowel syndrome
- circumstances when people need to be referred to a specialist for further tests.

It does not specifically look at:

- irritable bowel syndrome in children and young people under 18 years
- people with other gastrointestinal disorders such as non-ulcer dyspepsia (indigestion with no obvious cause) or coeliac disease.

DHSSPS advises that this guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it for implementation in HSC.

The full NICE clinical guideline is available for download at:

[Irritable bowel syndrome](#)

The HSC sector also should note that;

1. The Department expects HSC organisations to take account of this guidance in the planning and delivery of services to patients with irritable bowel syndrome.
2. This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case.
3. This guideline will be reviewed by NICE as and when required.
4. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at [Irritable bowel syndrome](#) and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice.
5. NICE has developed related guidance on Irritable bowel syndrome as follows
  - Faecal incontinence: the management of faecal incontinence in adults. NICE clinical guideline 49 (2007), for download at [www.nice.org.uk/CG049](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG049)
  - Physical activity. PHI002 (2006), for download at [www.nice.org.uk/PHI002](http://www.nice.org.uk/PHI002)
  - Referral guidelines for suspected cancer, CG 27, for download at [www.nice.org.uk/CG027](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG027) and
  - Depression: management of depression in primary and secondary care, CG 23, for download at [www.nice.org.uk/CG023](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG023)

All NICE guidance endorsed by the Department to date can be accessed on the DHSSPS website at [Safety, Quality and Standards | NICE Guidance | DHSSPS\(NI\)](#)

Circular HSS (PPMD) (NICE) 01/006 issued on 30 June 2006 provides further information on the Northern Ireland process for reviewing NICE guidance and further details on the local status of the Institute's guidance. This circular can be accessed at:

[http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice\\_guidance\\_01-06.pdf](http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf)

*Michael McBride*

**DR MICHAEL MCBRIDE**  
**Chief Medical Officer**