

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, Resydënter 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) 20/09 CG 74**

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: 2 March 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, NICPPET  
Chief Executive, NIPEC  
Chief Executive, RMSC

**Dear Colleagues**

**Clinical Guideline No 74 – Surgical Site Infection**

The advice in the NICE guideline covers:

- adults and children who are going to have a cut through the skin for an operation.

It does not specifically look at:

- adults and children who are going to have an operation that does not involve a cut through the skin on the outside of the body
- adults and children who are going to have procedures involving thin tubes (called

catheters) placed in blood vessels, tubes (called shunts) inserted into the body to divert fluid, thin flexible telescopes (called endoscopes) to view the inside of the body or metal pins used externally to treat broken bones.

This guideline updates and replaces NICE technology appraisal guidance 24 (published April 2001) for download at : <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11423>

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:  
<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG74>

The HSC sector also should note that;

1. The Department expects the HSC sector to take account of this guidance in their delivery of services to patients undergoing surgery which involves cutting through the skin.
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. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG74> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice.
4. This guidance will be updated by NICE as required.
5. NICE has published related guidance as follows:

Inadvertent perioperative hypothermia: The management of inadvertent perioperative hypothermia in adults. NICE clinical guideline 65 (2008). Available for download at [www.nice.org.uk/CG065](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG065)

Infection control: Prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care. NICE clinical guideline 2 (2003). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG002](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG002)

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) 01/06 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**