

Introduction to the UVA Nutrition Support Traineeship Manual

This manual was originally developed to accompany the lectures and discussions during the week-long nutrition support traineeship at the University of Virginia Health System (UVAHS). We have expanded the information so that it can now also serve as a self-study resource. The goal of the manual is to provide up to date nutrition support information for adult patients in a practical, clinically relevant format. Our target audience is clinicians that are beyond the entry-level stage of their career, so this manual intentionally does not cover the details of some basic nutrition concepts and calculations.

We focus on areas of nutrition support that our traineeship participants tell us are of most importance to them in daily clinical practice. We try to address current areas of controversy within each module, emphasize where there are gaps in the available evidence, and identify which situations require clinical judgment.

Wherever possible, we have tried to reference original research and address the limitations of the data where pertinent. As detailed within the “Evidence-based Practice” module, it is essential for clinicians to understand the methods and limitations of **original research** to be able to understand when to apply the information to their particular patient population. This is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the literature, but a practical, evidence-based resource.

Clinical guidelines of various nutrition and critical care societies are infrequently referenced because these guidelines often do not address the details and primary limitations of the research. It is important to note how many recommendations within the various society guidelines are based primarily on expert opinion or low level evidence, due to a lack of high quality nutrition research. We do encourage clinicians to become familiar with American and international nutrition support guidelines, and to note where there is agreement and differences between the various guidelines. The manual is not designed to be a study guide for the CNSC exam.

Our goal is to encourage critical thinking and promote an advanced level of patient care.

“...Guidelines should clearly distinguish between recommendations that apply to virtually all patients in all circumstances and those in which alternative courses of action are both reasonable and may—in specific circumstances—be preferable.” (1)

“...authors of [clinical practice guidelines] CPGs should make it clear that they do not wish to generate uniform practice for all patients and all clinicians, but rather provide background information and some wider judgments necessary to make decisions.” (1)

1. Jaeschke R, Guyatt GH, Schünemann H. Ten things you should consider before you believe a clinical practice guideline. *Intensive Care Med.* 2015 Jul;41(7):1340-2.