**AAOS guidelines use the following language in constructing all recommendations:**

Recommendations based on **STRENGTH** evidence state: We RECOMMEND Treatment X

Recommendations based on **MODERATE** evidence state: We SUGGEST Treatment X

Recommendations based on **WEAK** evidence state: Treatment X is an OPTION

Recommendations based on **Inconclusive or Conflicting** evidence state: We are Unable to Recommend For or Against Treatment X

Recommendations based on the **CONSENSUS** of the work group state: In the absence of reliable evidence, it is the OPINION of this work group…

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**The Language of Evidence Based Clinical Practice Guidelines**

- **Treatment of Pediatric Diaphyseal Femur Fractures**
- **Treatment of Osteoarthritis of the Knee**
- **Treatment of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
- **Diagnosis of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
- **Prevention of Pulmonary Embolism**

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**Brought to you by:**

AAOS Guidelines and Technology Oversight Committee & AAOS Evidence Based Practice Committee

[www.aaos.org/guidelines](http://www.aaos.org/guidelines)
Evidence Based Clinical Practice Guidelines

Evidence based clinical practice guidelines are systematically developed statements to assist practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances.

The guidelines are composed of recommendations classified by their quality of evidence as recommendations, suggestions, or options.

Guideline language is important because busy practicing clinicians require efficient tools that are clean and concise, use simple language and have a clear format. Clinicians want to be able to scan a document quickly, identify the relevant patients populations, and see what actions are recommended (Barton et al. (2007) How to Read the New Recommendation Statement: Methods Update from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Annals of Internal Medicine, 147 (2), 123-128).

Understanding AAOS Guideline Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline Language</th>
<th>Strength of Recommendation</th>
<th>Level of Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We RECOMMEND</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Level I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We SUGGEST</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Level II and III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment X is an OPTION</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Level IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are unable to recommend FOR OR AGAINST Treatment X</td>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>There is insufficient or conflicting evidence not allowing a recommendation for or against intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the absence of reliable evidence, it is the opinion of the work group …*</td>
<td>Consensus*</td>
<td>None*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the work group to make a consensus-based recommendation, the recommendation must be supported by a rationale that follows specific rules.

Guideline Language Effective as of June 2007