

Grades for Certainty of Evidence	
Designation	Description
High	There is high confidence that available evidence reflects true effect. Further research is very unlikely to change the confidence in the estimate of effect. Included studies will be of high or intermediate quality.
Moderate	There is moderate confidence that available evidence reflects true effect. Further research is likely to have an important impact on the confidence in estimate of effect and may change the estimate. Included studies will be of intermediate or low quality.
Low	There is limited confidence in the estimate of effect. The true effect may be substantially different from the estimate of the effect. Included studies will be of low quality.
Very Low	There is very little confidence in the estimate of effect. The true effect is likely to be substantially different from the estimate of effect. Any estimate of effect is very uncertain. Included studies will be of low or very low quality.

Disclaimer

The information, data, and draft recommendations provided by the College of American Pathologists are presented for informational and public feedback purposes only.

The draft recommendations and supporting documents will be removed on July 16, 2026.

The draft recommendations along with the public comments received and completed evidence review will be reassessed by the expert panel in order to formulate the final recommendations.

These draft materials should not be stored, adapted, or redistributed in any manner.



Grades for Strength of Recommendations		
Designation	Recommendation	Rationale
Strong Recommendation	Recommend for or against a particular practice (Can include “must” or “should”)	Supported by high or moderate quality of evidence and clear benefit that outweighs any harms
Conditional Recommendation	Recommend for or against a particular practice (Can include “should” or “may”)	Some limitations in quality of evidence (moderate to low), balance of benefits and harms, values, or costs but panel concludes that there is sufficient evidence and/or benefit to inform a recommendation

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Crosswalk between CAP and GRADE Strength of Recommendations		
CAP Designation	GRADE Designation	Rationale
Strong Recommendation	Strong Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High strength of evidence • Benefits over harms • Implementable statement
Recommendation	Conditional Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate or low strength of evidence • Benefits over harms, or balance • Implementable statement
Expert Consensus Opinion	Conditional Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low or very low strength of evidence • Balance of benefits and harms • Implementable statement

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Good Practice Statements

According to the GRADE approach, good practice statements (GPS) are recommendations panels may consider important but are not appropriate to be formally rated for certainty of evidence. In addition to the set of key questions formulated *a priori*, the expert panel decided to write GPSs, which reflect expert consensus opinions supported by a limited number of studies and data that were not formally included in the evidence-base nor systematically rated.

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