



SCREENING FOR DEPRESSION IN ADULTS CLINICAL SUMMARY OF U.S. PREVENTIVE SERVICES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION

Population	Nonpregnant adults 18 years or older	
Recommendation	Screen when staff-assisted depression care supports* are in place to assure accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and follow-up. Grade: B	Do not routinely screen when staff-assisted depression care supports* are not in place. Grade: C

Risk Assessment	<p>Persons at increased risk for depression are considered at risk throughout their lifetime. Groups at increased risk include persons with other psychiatric disorders, including substance misuse; persons with a family history of depression; persons with chronic medical diseases; and persons who are unemployed or of lower socioeconomic status. Also, women are at increased risk compared with men. However, the presence of risk factors alone cannot distinguish depressed patients from nondepressed patients.</p>	
Screening Tests	<p>Simple screening questions may perform as well as more complex instruments. Any positive screening test result should trigger a full diagnostic interview using standard diagnostic criteria.</p>	
Timing of Screening	<p>The optimal interval for screening is unknown. In older adults, significant depressive symptoms are associated with common life events, including medical illness, cognitive decline, bereavement, and institutional placement in residential or inpatient settings.</p>	
Balance of Harms and Benefits		<p>Limited evidence suggests that screening for depression in the absence of staff-assisted depression care does not improve depression outcomes.</p>
Suggestions for Practice	<p>“Staff-assisted depression care supports” refers to clinical staff that assists the primary care clinician by providing some direct depression care and/or coordination, case management, or mental health treatment.</p>	
Relevant USPSTF Recommendations	<p>Related USPSTF recommendations on screening for suicidality and screening children and adolescents for depression are available at www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov.</p>	

For a summary of the evidence systematically reviewed in making these recommendations, the full recommendation statement, and supporting documents, please go to <http://www.preventiveservices.ahrq.gov>.

*See the Suggestions for Practice section of this figure for further explanation.