



U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Seeks Comment on Draft Recommendation Statements on Screening for Iron Deficiency Anemia

Task Force finds insufficient evidence to recommend for or against screening for iron deficiency anemia in pregnant women and young children and iron supplementation in pregnant women

WASHINGTON, D.C. – March 31, 2015 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) posted draft recommendations today on screening for iron deficiency anemia (IDA) in pregnant women and children ages 6 to 24 months.

In the draft recommendation on screening for IDA in pregnant women who have no symptoms, the Task Force found that there is not enough evidence on the benefits and harms of routine screening for IDA or the use of iron supplements during pregnancy, and it cannot recommend for or against either service. Both are I statements.

In its draft recommendation on screening for IDA in young children, the Task Force found that there is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening for IDA in children ages 6 to 24 months who have no signs or symptoms of the condition. This is an I statement.

Grades in these draft recommendations:

I: The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

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The Task Force is providing an opportunity for public comment on these draft recommendation statements through April 27. All public comments will be considered as the Task Force develops its final recommendations.

“Iron deficiency is a common cause of anemia in the United States,” said Task Force co-vice chair David C. Grossman, M.D., M.P.H. “However, since most people in the United States get enough iron by eating a well-balanced diet, it’s unclear whether iron supplementation or screening for iron deficiency anemia in this current era can improve health.”

Good sources of iron in the diet include meat, poultry, certain vegetables and fruits, fortified breads and grain, and infant formula and cereal for babies.

“The Task Force is dedicated to improving the health of pregnant women and their babies, as well as young children,” said Task Force member Francisco Garcia, M.D., M.P.H. “Additional research is needed to evaluate whether screening for iron deficiency anemia can improve health outcomes for mothers and young children.”

The Task Force’s draft recommendation statements have been posted for public comment on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from March 31 to April 27, 2015 at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/us-preventive-services-task-force-opportunities-for-public-comment>.

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based

recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

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