

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommends Primary Care Interventions to Support Breastfeeding

Task Force found evidence that interventions are effective in increasing the rate and duration of breastfeeding

WASHINGTON, D.C. – October 25, 2016 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today published a final recommendation statement and evidence summary on primary care interventions to support breastfeeding. The Task Force recommends providing interventions to support breastfeeding among women who are pregnant or who have recently given birth. This is a **B recommendation**.

Breastfeeding has a number of health benefits for mothers and their children. Babies who are breastfed are less likely to get illnesses such as ear infections, or to develop chronic conditions such as asthma, obesity, and diabetes. For mothers, breastfeeding is associated with a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes.

Grades in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

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“Breastfeeding has real health benefits for babies and their mothers. Primary care clinicians can help new moms who breastfeed be successful,” says Task Force member Ann E. Kurth, Ph.D., R.N. “Primary care interventions to support breastfeeding are effective in increasing both the number of mothers who breastfeed and how long they breastfeed their babies.”

Effective interventions that clinicians can implement or offer as a referral to support women during pregnancy and after childbirth include education about the benefits of breastfeeding, guidance and encouragement, and practical help on how to breastfeed.

The Task Force recognizes that the decision to breastfeed is a personal one. The Task Force encourages primary care clinicians to provide interventions that meet the needs of their patients’ situations and that help women make an informed choice about breastfeeding.

The Task Force’s recommendation has been published online in *JAMA*, as well as on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. A draft version of this recommendation was available for public comment from April 26 to May 23, 2016.

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.

Dr. Ann E. Kurth is dean of the Yale School of Nursing and the Linda Koch Lorimer professor of nursing. Dr. Kurth is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) and a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the New York Academy of Medicine. Dr. Kurth is a clinically trained epidemiologist and certified nurse-midwife who studies approaches to improving HIV and sexually transmitted infection prevention, screening, and care; reproductive health; and global health workforce/system strengthening efforts.

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