

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommends Against Screening for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in Adults

Task Force found no benefit for screening in people without respiratory symptoms

WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 5, 2016 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) published a final recommendation today on screening for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. The Task Force recommends against screening for COPD in asymptomatic adults. This is a **grade D recommendation**.

COPD is a serious, chronic condition that affects a person's ability to breathe. It is the third leading cause of death in the United States, affecting approximately 14 million people each year. The most common symptoms of COPD are difficulty breathing, chronic cough, phlegm production, and wheezing. Smoking is the main risk factor for COPD. More than 70 percent of people with COPD are current or former smokers.

"The Task Force did not find any evidence that screening for COPD in adults without respiratory symptoms results in improved health outcomes," said Task Force member William Phillips, M.D., M.P.H. "Given the lack of benefit of early detection and the time and effort required to screen for COPD in all individuals, the Task Force is recommending against screening in asymptomatic people."

Grade in this recommendation:

D: Not recommended.

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"Clinicians should be aware of the risk factors for COPD, including current or former exposure to tobacco smoke. They should counsel patients not to start smoking, and for those who already smoke, recommend behavioral and pharmacologic therapies to help them quit," said Task Force chair Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, Ph.D., M.D., M.A.S.

The Task Force's recommendation has been published online in *JAMA*, as well as on the Task Force Web site at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>. A fact sheet that explains the recommendation statement in plain language is also available. A draft version of this recommendation was available for public comment in August 2015.

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. Phillips is the Theodore J. Phillips endowed professor in family medicine and clinical professor of health services and epidemiology at the University of Washington, Seattle. Dr. Phillips is also senior associate editor of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Dr. Bibbins-Domingo is the Lee Goldman, MD, endowed chair in medicine and professor of medicine and of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). She is a general internist, attending physician, and the director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

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