

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Final Recommendation Statement on Screening for Osteoporosis to Prevent Fractures

Task Force found that screening for osteoporosis can prevent fractures in women age 65 years and older and in women younger than 65 who are at increased risk; more research is needed for men

WASHINGTON, D.C. – June 26, 2018 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a final recommendation statement and evidence summary on screening for osteoporosis to prevent fractures. Based on its review of the evidence, the Task Force recommends screening for osteoporosis to prevent fractures in women age 65 years and older. This is a **B recommendation**.

The Task Force also recommends screening for osteoporosis to prevent fractures in women younger than age 65 years who have been through menopause and are at increased risk for osteoporosis. This is a **B recommendation**.

Grades in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

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

[Learn more here](#)

Osteoporosis is a condition where bones become weak and can break or fracture more easily. These fractures, also called osteoporotic or fragility fractures, can result from a minor fall or injury that typically would not cause a break in normal, healthy bones. These fractures can lead to serious disability, loss of independence, decreased quality of life, and, in some cases, even death.

“Without screening, most women won’t know that they have osteoporosis until they have a fracture. Screening and treatment can help prevent these fractures,” says Task Force member Chien-Wen Tseng, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.E.E. “Based on the evidence, we recommend screening for women over the age of 65 and younger women who have been through menopause and are at increased risk for osteoporosis.”

The Task Force found that there is not enough evidence to determine if men should be screened for osteoporosis to prevent fractures. This is an **I statement** (insufficient evidence) and not a recommendation for or against the practice.

“While both men and women can develop osteoporosis, there’s less evidence to know whether screening and current treatments prevent fractures in men without a history of fractures. More studies are needed that look at how well treatments work in men who have not had a fracture,” says Task Force vice chair Alex H. Krist, M.D., M.P.H.

These final recommendations apply to older adults who do not have a history of prior fragility fractures or health conditions that could lead to weakened bones.

This recommendation statement has been published online in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, as well as on the Task Force Web site at: <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org>.

A draft version of the recommendation statement was available for public comment from November 7, 2017 to December 4, 2017.

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. Tseng is the Hawaii Medical Service Association endowed chair in health services and quality research, an associate professor, and the associate research director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine. She is also a physician investigator with the nonprofit Pacific Health Research and Education Institute.

Dr. Krist is a professor of family medicine and population health at Virginia Commonwealth University and an active clinician and teacher at the Fairfax Family Practice Residency. He is codirector of the Virginia Ambulatory Care Outcomes Research Network and director of community-engaged research at the Center for Clinical and Translational Research.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (202) 572-2044