

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on screening for asymptomatic bacteriuria in adults (ASB). It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from April 23, 2019 to May 20, 2019. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

## Screening for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Screening for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria in Adults*.

The Task Force recommends screening all pregnant people for ASB using a urine test to help prevent the

development of a urinary tract infection. If a person who is pregnant has ASB, they should be treated with antibiotics.

The Task Force also recommends against screening adults who are not pregnant for ASB.

### What is ASB?

ASB is when someone has bacteria in their urine but doesn't have signs and symptoms of a urinary tract infection.

## Facts about Asymptomatic Bacteriuria

The urinary tract is the system that moves urine through the body and includes the kidneys, the thin tubes connecting the kidneys to the bladder, and the urethra (the tube that carries urine out of the body).

ASB is when someone has bacteria in their urine but doesn't have any signs or symptoms of a urinary tract infection. ASB is much more common in women than in men and is also more likely during pregnancy. The only way to find it is to screen with a urine test.

Pregnant people who have ASB are more likely to develop urinary tract infections because of changes to the body during pregnancy. Pregnant people are also more likely to develop a severe infection of the kidneys called pyelonephritis. This can cause damage to the kidneys, cause the baby to be born too early, and can even be life-threatening to the mother.

## Potential Benefits and Harms of Screening and Treatment for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria

The Task Force looked at evidence on screening and treatment for ASB in adults.

The Task Force found that screening pregnant people for ASB is effective at identifying when the bacteria is present. Treatment with antibiotics prevents serious infections from happening and protects the mother and baby.

For adults who are not pregnant, the Task Force found no benefit to screening for or treating ASB. The chances of developing an infection from ASB in adults who are not pregnant is small.

The Task Force found few harms to screening for ASB. There can be side effects from treatment with antibiotics and there is some concern about the effects of antibiotics on healthy bacteria in the body.

## The Draft Recommendations on Screening for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria: What Do They Mean?

Here are the Task Force's draft recommendations on screening for ASB. They are based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of screening for this purpose. They are also based on the size of the potential benefits and harms. Task Force recommendation grades are explained in the box at the end of this fact sheet.

When the Task Force issues a **B Grade**, it recommends screening because it has more potential benefits than harms. When the Task Force recommends against (**Grade D**) screening, it is because there is no overall benefit or there are more potential harms than potential benefits.

Before you send comments to the Task Force, you may want to read the [draft recommendation statement](#). The recommendation statement explains the evidence the Task Force reviewed and how it decided on the grade. An [evidence document](#) provides more detail about the scientific studies the Task Force reviewed.

**1** The USPSTF recommends screening for *asymptomatic bacteriuria* with *urine culture* for pregnant persons.

**B Grade**

**2** The USPSTF recommends against screening for asymptomatic bacteriuria in nonpregnant adults.

**D Grade**

### Notes

**1** *asymptomatic bacteriuria*  
Having bacteria in the urine without any signs or symptoms of infection.

*urine culture*

A test that can detect bacteria in the urine.

## What is the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force?

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medicines. The recommendations apply to people with no signs or symptoms of the disease being discussed.

To develop a recommendation statement, Task Force members consider the best available science and research on a topic. For each topic, the Task Force posts draft documents for public comment, including a **draft recommendation statement**. All comments are reviewed and considered in developing the final recommendation statement. To learn more, visit the [Task Force Web site](#).

[Click Here to Learn More about Asymptomatic Bacteriuria](#)

 [Asymptomatic Bacteriuria](#)  
(MedlinePlus)

 [The Urinary Tract and How It Works](#)  
(National Institutes of Health)

 [Kidney Infection \(Pyelonephritis\)](#)  
(National Institutes of Health)

USPSTF Recommendation Grades	
Grade	Definition
A	Recommended.
B	Recommended.
C	Recommendation depends on the patient's situation.
D	Not recommended.
I statement	There is not enough evidence to make a recommendation.

## [Click Here](#) to Comment on the Draft Recommendation



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between April 23, 2019 and May 20, 2019.



All comments will be considered for use in writing final recommendations.