

Understanding Task Force Draft Recommendations

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on screening for impaired visual acuity in older adults. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from October 26, 2021 to November 22, 2021. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Screening for Impaired Visual Acuity in Older Adults*.

The Task Force determined that there is not enough evidence to recommend for or against screening for impaired vision in older adults who have not noticed any problems with their vision.

This draft recommendation statement only applies to screening in the primary care setting and for people who do not have any problems with their vision. It does not apply to care provided by an eye specialist.

Facts About Impaired Vision in Older Adults

Impaired vision is a serious and common condition facing millions of people nationwide. It is associated with decreased quality of life in older people and can affect one's ability to perform daily tasks, drive, and can increase the risk of falls and other accidental injuries.

Common causes of impaired vision in older adults include:

- Refractive errors: when the eyes cannot clearly focus.
- Presbyopia: the gradual loss of the eyes' ability to focus on nearby objects.
- Age related macular degeneration: a condition that causes vision loss in the center of the eye.
- Cataracts: the clouding of the lens of the eye, which causes blurred vision.
- Glaucoma: a group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness by damaging a nerve in the back of the eye called the optic nerve. *Glaucoma is addressed in a separate Task Force recommendation and is not included in this recommendation.*

Older age is the most important risk factor for most types of impaired vision. Other risk factors vary by specific conditions or causes of impaired vision.

Facts About Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults

In the primary care setting, screening is most commonly done with an eye chart test as primary care clinicians typically do not have access to the same screening tests as eye specialists. It can also be done by asking patients questions about their vision. The tests that are available in the primary care setting are not as accurate as comprehensive eye exams conducted by an eye specialist.

Potential Benefits and Harms of Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults

The goal of screening is to identify impaired vision so it can be identified and treated. However, the Task Force did not find enough evidence to determine the benefits and harms of screening for impaired vision in older adults. The Task Force is calling for more research.

It is important for anyone who has concerns about their vision to talk to their clinician so that they can get the care they need.



What is impaired visual acuity and impaired vision?

Impaired visual acuity, also known as impaired vision, is a decrease in how sharp or clear one's vision is.

Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults

The Draft Recommendation on Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults: What Does It Mean?

Here is the Task Force's draft recommendation on screening for impaired vision in older adults. It is based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of screening for this purpose. It is 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 an **I Statement**, it means the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of the service.

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 concludes that the current **evidence is insufficient** to assess the balance of benefits and harms of **screening** for **impaired visual acuity** in **older adults**. **(I Statement)**

Notes

1 **evidence is insufficient**
There is not enough information to make a recommendation.

screening

Eye chart test or questions about vision.

impaired visual acuity

Decrease in sharpness or clarity of vision.

older adults

Individuals ages 65 years or older.

Screening for Impaired Vision in Older Adults




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

The Task Force is an independent, non-federal, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of people nationwide 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 website**.

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.

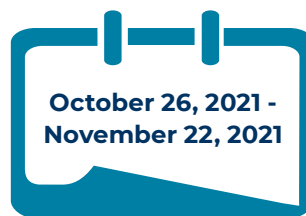
[Click Here to Learn More About Impaired Vision in Older Adults](#)

-  **Common Eye Disorders and Diseases**
(Centers for Disease Prevention & Control)
-  **Fast Facts of Common Eye Disorders**
(Centers for Disease Prevention & Control)
-  **Vision Impairment and Blindness**
(MedlinePlus)
-  **Low Vision**
(National Eye Institute)

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



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between October 26, 2021 - November 22, 2021.



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