

Summary of USPSTF Draft Recommendation

Screening and Supplementation for Iron Deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anemia During Pregnancy

February 2024



What is this draft recommendation about?

This recommendation focuses on screening and supplementation for iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy. **Iron deficiency** is when the body has low levels of iron. **Iron deficiency anemia** is when the body does not have the iron it needs to make enough healthy red blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout the body.

Screening for iron deficiency is done through a blood test to check iron levels in the body. **Supplementation** would involve taking a pill such as a multivitamin or single tablet that contains iron.



What does the USPSTF recommend?



The USPSTF concludes that the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of routine iron supplementation for pregnant women to prevent adverse maternal health and birth outcomes.



The USPSTF concludes that the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of screening for iron deficiency anemia in pregnant women to prevent adverse maternal health and birth outcomes.

So, what does that mean?

There is not enough evidence to decide whether or not all pregnant people should be screened for iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia. There is also limited evidence on whether using iron supplements improves the overall health of pregnant people and their babies.



Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation applies to pregnant people who do not have signs or symptoms of iron deficiency anemia. If a pregnant person has concerns about their health, including tiredness, headaches, or weakness, they should talk to their healthcare professional so that they can get the care they need.

This recommendation is not for pregnant people who have a known diagnosis of iron deficiency, are malnourished, or have a blood disorder or a disorder where the body does not absorb enough nutrients that may increase their need for iron.



Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Iron is a nutrient that is important to overall health.
- Pregnant people are at increased risk for developing iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia because people need more iron when they are pregnant.
- Black and Mexican American people have higher rates of iron deficiency anemia during pregnancy than White people.

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What are the benefits?

There is limited evidence on whether or not screening and supplementation for iron deficiency improves the health of pregnant people and their babies.



What are the harms?

There is limited evidence on the harms of screening, but it is unlikely to cause any serious harms. The evidence on the harms of supplementation is also limited but potential harms could include nausea, constipation, pain, and vomiting.



Where can I learn more?

[Iron Deficiency Anemia](#) (Office on Women's Health)

[Iron Deficiency Anemia](#) (National Institutes of Health)

[Anemia in Pregnancy](#) (National Institutes of Health)

[Anemia](#) (Medline Plus)

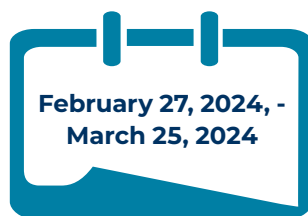


How can I comment?

Visit the [USPSTF website](#) to read the full draft recommendation and submit a comment.



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between February 27, 2024, and March 25, 2024.



All comments will be considered as the Task Force finalizes the recommendation.