

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on interventions for tobacco smoking cessation in adults, including pregnant people. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from June 2, 2020, to June 29, 2020. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

## Interventions for Tobacco Smoking Cessation in Adults

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Interventions for Tobacco Smoking Cessation in Adults, Including Pregnant People*. The Task Force recommends clinicians ask all adults and pregnant people about their tobacco use, advise those who use tobacco to quit, and connect them to proven, safe methods to help them quit.

Examples of proven and safe methods to help people quit include behavioral counseling and, for adults who are not pregnant, Food and Drug Administration

(FDA)-approved medications. More research is needed on the benefits and harms of using medications to help pregnant people quit smoking.

It is unclear whether e-cigarettes help adults quit smoking. Since other proven, safe methods are available, clinicians should direct adults who smoke to other methods.

These recommendations apply to all adults 18 and over, including those who are pregnant.

What are interventions for tobacco smoking cessation?

These are different ways to help people quit smoking, including behavioral counseling for all adults, and for people who are not pregnant, medications such as nicotine patches and gums and prescription medicines.

## Facts About Smoking and its Health Effects

Quitting smoking is one of the best things anyone can do for their health.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. Smoking leads to nearly half a million deaths in the U.S. each year and smoking during pregnancy can cause serious harms to both the pregnant person and baby. About 20 percent of adults in the U.S. use tobacco and approximately 7 percent of people report smoking during pregnancy.

## Interventions to Help People Quit Smoking

There are many effective and safe methods to help people quit smoking. The best method, or combination of methods, for any one individual can vary depending on their medical history, preferences, and smoking behavior.

Proven, safe methods to help someone quit smoking include behavioral counseling interventions and medications.

- Effective counseling can be delivered in-person or over the phone, by a physician or nurse, and in an individual or group counseling setting.
- For adults who are not pregnant, medications can also be used to help people quit smoking. The FDA has approved several medications:
  - o Nicotine replacement products like nicotine patches and gum
  - o Prescription medicines including varenicline (Chantix) and bupropion (Zyban)

Many studies show that a combination of behavioral counseling interventions and medications can help the most. Patients should talk with their clinicians to determine what is likely to work best for them.

The Task Force looked at e-cigarettes as a way to help adults quit smoking. Based on the current evidence, it is unclear whether e-cigarettes are a helpful smoking cessation tool. Since other proven, safe methods are available, clinicians should direct adults who smoke to these other methods.

## Potential Benefits and Harms of Interventions for Tobacco Cessation

### Behavioral Interventions

The Task Force found that a variety of behavioral interventions can help adults quit using tobacco:

- For adults who are not pregnant, physician and nurse advice, individual and group counseling, and phone interventions were found to be most effective.
- For those who are pregnant, counseling interventions were found to be beneficial.

The harms of these ways to help people quit are small.

### Medications

The Task Force found that for people who are not pregnant, FDA-approved medicines and products like nicotine gum or patches, when used alone or with counseling, are effective in helping people quit smoking. Harms vary based on the medications used, but overall, there are few harms.

In pregnant adults, there is not enough evidence to determine the benefits and harms of medications to help people quit smoking.

### E-Cigarettes

Right now, it is still unknown whether or not using e-cigarettes may help people quit smoking. There is not enough evidence to determine the benefits and harms of using e-cigarettes as a way to help people quit smoking.

## The Draft Recommendations on Interventions for Tobacco Smoking Cessation in Adults: What Do They Mean?

Here are the Task Force's draft recommendations on interventions for tobacco smoking cessation in adults, including pregnant people. They are based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of interventions 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 an **A Grade**, it recommends counseling or medications because they have more potential benefits than harms. An **I Statement** means that there is not enough evidence to recommend for or against the preventive 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 recommends that clinicians ask all adults about *tobacco use*, advise them to stop using tobacco, and provide *behavioral interventions* and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved *pharmacotherapy* for *cessation* to adults who use tobacco. **(A Grade)**
- 2 The USPSTF recommends that clinicians ask all pregnant persons about tobacco use, advise them to stop using tobacco, and provide behavioral interventions for cessation to pregnant women who use tobacco. **(A Grade)**
- 3 The USPSTF concludes that the *current evidence is insufficient* to assess the balance of benefits and harms of pharmacotherapy interventions for tobacco cessation in pregnant persons. **(I Statement)**
- 4 The USPSTF concludes that the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of *e-cigarettes* for tobacco cessation in adults, including pregnant persons. The USPSTF recommends that clinicians direct patients who use tobacco to other tobacco cessation *interventions with proven effectiveness and established safety*. **(I Statement)**

## Notes

- 1 *tobacco use*  
Tobacco use includes smoking cigarettes, cigars, and pipes; using smokeless tobacco; and using e-cigarettes or other electronic nicotine delivery systems.
- behavioral interventions*  
Examples include individual and group counseling, in-person or by phone.
- pharmacotherapy*  
Using medications to help quit smoking, including nicotine patches, gum, and certain prescription medicines.
- cessation*  
Quitting smoking.
- 3 *current evidence is insufficient*  
The Task Force did not find enough information to make a recommendation.
- 4 *e-cigarettes*  
Refers to all vaping products and electronic nicotine delivery systems.
- interventions with proven effectiveness and established safety*  
Methods such as behavioral counseling, nicotine patches and gum, or certain prescription medicines that are safe and help people successfully quit smoking.

### 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 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 website](#).

**Click Here to Learn More About Smoking and Smoking Cessation**

- Quit Smoking**  
(healthfinder.gov)
- Quit Smoking**  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking**  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

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

