

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria

Pregnant people should be screened for bacteria that can lead to harmful urinary tract and kidney infections; nonpregnant adults should not be screened

WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 23, 2019 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation and draft evidence review on screening for asymptomatic bacteriuria (ASB) in adults. Based on its review of the evidence, the Task Force recommends screening pregnant people for ASB using a urine test. **This is a B recommendation.** The Task Force recommends against screening adults who are not pregnant for ASB. This is a **D recommendation.**

Grades in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

D: Not recommended.

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Asymptomatic bacteriuria is the presence of bacteria in urine in someone without signs or symptoms of a urinary tract infection. Because of changes to the body during pregnancy, pregnant people with ASB have a higher risk of developing urinary tract and kidney infections that can be harmful for the mother and baby. Pyelonephritis, a severe kidney infection, can cause damage to the kidneys, cause the baby to be born too early, and can even be life-threatening to the mother.

“The Task Force continues to recommend that clinicians screen all people who are pregnant for ASB at their first prenatal visit and treat if needed,” says Task Force member Melissa A. Simon, M.D., M.P.H. “The evidence shows that screening pregnant people with ASB can help reduce serious infections and health problems for the mother and the baby.”

Clinicians screen for ASB with a urine test. If ASB is found, they treat it with antibiotics to help prevent infections.

“For adults who are not pregnant, the Task Force continues to recommend against screening for ASB,” says Task Force member Chyke Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H. “The chances of developing an infection from ASB in nonpregnant adults is small and there is the potential for some harm from ASB treatment, such as antibiotic resistance.”

The Task Force’s draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review have been posted for public comment on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from April 23, 2019 to May 20, 2019 at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm.

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. Simon is the George H. Gardner professor of clinical gynecology, the vice chair of clinical research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and professor of preventive medicine and medical social sciences at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She is the founder and

director of the Center for Health Equity Transformation and the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative and a member of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Dr. Doubeni is the Harrison McCrea Dickson, M.D., and Clifford C. Baker, M.D., presidential professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He is an associate professor of epidemiology, a senior scholar at the Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and a senior fellow in the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. He previously served as interim associate vice provost for diversity at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

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