



U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Behavioral Counseling to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle in Adults Without Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease

Evidence shows that counseling can help prevent cardiovascular disease in some people at low or average risk, but the benefits are limited

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 29, 2016 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review on behavioral counseling to promote a healthful diet and physical activity for cardiovascular disease prevention in adults without cardiovascular risk factors. The Task Force recommends that primary care professionals consider offering or referring people at low or average risk for heart disease to counseling to encourage healthy lifestyle choices to prevent cardiovascular disease. **This is a C recommendation.**

Grades in this recommendation:

C: The recommendation depends on the patient's situation.

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Cardiovascular disease, which includes heart attacks and strokes, is the leading cause of death in the United States. Adults who have a healthy diet and are physically active have lower rates of heart health problems than those who do not.

“The Task Force found that for people who are not at increased risk for heart disease, counseling on healthy eating and physical activity may help prevent heart disease for some people,” says Task Force vice chair Susan Curry, Ph.D. “In this draft recommendation, the Task Force encourages primary care professionals to individualize this counseling and consider offering it to adults who are interested in and motivated to make lifestyle changes.” The Task Force’s recommendation applies to adults age 18 and older without obesity and who have not been diagnosed with high blood pressure or cholesterol, diabetes, or abnormal blood glucose.

“This recommendation complements our other Task Force recommendations that encourage intensive behavioral counseling for people at high risk for heart disease due to cardiovascular risk factors, such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or abnormal blood glucose,” says Task Force member Karina Davidson, Ph.D., M.A.Sc. “This recommendation focuses on people who are at lower risk for heart disease and who do not fall into any of the groups addressed in these other recommendations.” 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 November 29, 2016 to January 2, 2017 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. Curry is dean of the University of Iowa College of Public Health, where she also serves as a distinguished professor of health management and policy.

Dr. Davidson is vice dean and a professor of medicine and psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center. She is a licensed psychologist and is also chief academic officer at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (202) 572 -2044