

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Thyroid Dysfunction in Adults Without Symptoms

Task Force concludes evidence for screening is insufficient

WASHINGTON, D.C. – October 28, 2014 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation on screening for thyroid dysfunction, one of the most common endocrine (or hormone) conditions that doctors and nurses evaluate and treat. The Task Force concluded that the current evidence is insufficient to make a recommendation for or against screening for thyroid dysfunction in adults who are not pregnant and show no signs or symptoms of a thyroid problem. This is an I statement, and the Task Force has identified areas where more research is needed.

The Task Force is providing an opportunity for public comment on this draft recommendation statement until November 24. All comments will be considered as the Task Force develops its final recommendation.

Thyroid dysfunction is a spectrum of disorders related to the thyroid gland, which produces hormones that help control the body's metabolism. It includes hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism.

“People can have mild abnormalities in their thyroid tests and not have symptoms,” stated Task Force Co-vice Chair Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, Ph.D., M.D., M.A.S. “We don't know enough about the health consequences of finding these individuals and treating them. We need more research in this area.”

“Screening and treating asymptomatic adults for thyroid dysfunction is common practice,” said Task Force member Jessica Herzstein, M.D., M.P.H. “But right now we don't know if this ultimately benefits them in the long-term.”

The Task Force's draft recommendation statement has been posted for public comment on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from October 28 to November 24 at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/us-preventive-services-task-force-opportunities-for-public-comment>.

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.

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