

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection

Task Force recommends screening adults at increased risk

WASHINGTON, D.C. – March 8, 2016 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation on screening for latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and recommends screening adults at increased risk. This is a **grade B recommendation**.

People who are at increased risk for LTBI include people who were born in or who have lived in countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis (TB), including Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, China, Haiti, and Guatemala. Also, people who have lived in group settings where exposure to TB is more likely, such as homeless shelters or correctional facilities, are considered at increased risk for LTBI.

Grade in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

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TB infection is one of the most common infectious diseases in the world. Infection is caused by TB bacteria that are spread through the air when a person with active TB coughs or sneezes. People are exposed to TB through close contact with someone with active TB.

Although TB is less common in the United States, many people still become infected every year and are at risk of getting sick and spreading the infection to others.

About 30% of people exposed to the TB bacteria will develop LTBI, which means they are infected but do not have any symptoms. While these people cannot spread TB to others, if untreated, about 5% to 10% will eventually develop active TB.

The Task Force found that there are effective screening tests that can detect latent TB infection, and there are effective treatments to prevent people from progressing from latent TB infection to active TB disease.

“The Task Force recommends that primary care clinicians screen adults at increased risk for LTBI to help prevent the progression to active TB,” says Task Force member Francisco García, M.D., M.P.H.

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 March 8 to April 4 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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