

Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Vitamin D Deficiency in Adults

More research is needed to make a recommendation for or against screening

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 22, 2020 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement on screening for vitamin D deficiency in adults. The Task Force determined there is not enough evidence to recommend for or against screening for vitamin D deficiency in adults without signs or symptoms. **This is an I statement.** This draft recommendation does not apply to people who already have health conditions where vitamin D supplementation is required.

Grade in this recommendation:

I: The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

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Vitamin D is an important nutrient for keeping bones healthy, and it may also have a role in other aspects of good health. It is naturally found in some foods, can be taken through supplements, and can also be made by a person's body when they are exposed to the sun. If a person is vitamin D deficient, it means their level of vitamin D in the blood is too low. However, ideal vitamin D levels vary from person to person, so there is no single level of vitamin D that is considered too low for everyone.

“Based on our review, the Task Force determined there is not enough evidence to recommend for or against screening for vitamin D deficiency in adults without signs or symptoms,” says Task Force member Michael Silverstein, M.D., M.P.H. “We need more research to know what level of vitamin D people need to keep them healthy and what level is too low and can have negative health impacts.”

“We don't know the precise level of vitamin D in the body that leads to poor health outcomes, or which test might be a better indicator of vitamin D deficiency,” says Task Force member John Wong M.D. “Once we know the level of vitamin D that people need to remain healthy, or if there is a better test, more research on whether screening can help prevent negative outcomes, such as falls, cancer, or heart problems will be helpful.”

People who are concerned about their vitamin D levels should talk with their clinicians about their individual health needs.

The Task Force's draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review have been posted for public comment on the Task Force website at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from September 22, 2020, to October 19, 2020, 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. Silverstein is a professor of pediatrics, chief of the Division of General Academic Pediatrics, and vice chair of research for the Department of Pediatrics at the Boston University School of Medicine. He is also associate chief medical officer for research and population health at Boston Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine.

Dr. Wong is chief scientific officer, vice chair for Clinical Affairs, chief of the Division of Clinical Decision Making, and a primary care clinician in the Department of Medicine at Tufts Medical Center. He is also director of comparative effectiveness research for the Tufts Clinical Translational Science Institute and a professor of medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine and the Tufts University School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences.

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