

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Seeks Comment on Its Draft Recommendation Statement on Low-Dose Aspirin for Women at High Risk for Preeclampsia

WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 8, 2014 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement and published a final evidence summary on low-dose aspirin for the prevention of morbidity and mortality from preeclampsia. The Task Force recommends low-dose aspirin (81 mg/day) use after 12 weeks of pregnancy in women who are at high risk for preeclampsia. This is a B recommendation. The Task Force is providing an opportunity for public comment on this draft recommendation statement until May 5. All public comments will be considered as the Task Force develops its final recommendation.

This recommendation applies to pregnant women who are at high risk for preeclampsia and who don't show signs or symptoms of the condition and haven't had any health problems from using aspirin in the past. Preeclampsia is a complex condition that occurs in pregnant women and is marked by a rise in blood pressure and excess protein in the urine after 20 weeks of pregnancy. It is one of the leading causes of health complications for expectant mothers and their babies, affecting about 4 percent of all pregnancies in the United States.

"Preeclampsia can cause serious health problems for both expectant mothers and their babies," says Task Force member Jessica Herzstein, M.D., M.P.H. "The good news is that pregnant women who are at high risk for developing preeclampsia can take a low dosage of aspirin daily to help to prevent the condition. This can result in better health outcomes for both the mother and the baby."

For women at high risk, low-dose aspirin has been found to reduce the risk of preeclampsia, premature birth, and intrauterine growth restriction, or IUGR—when a baby grows slower than expected in the mother's womb.

"Only a small percentage of pregnant women are at high risk for preeclampsia," says Task Force chair Michael L. LeFevre, M.D., M.S.P.H. "Before taking aspirin, pregnant women should talk to their doctor or nurse to determine their risk and discuss if taking aspirin is right for them."

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 April 8 to May 5, 2014 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.

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