

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Abnormal Blood Sugar and Diabetes

Task Force finds evidence of benefit in screening adults at increased risk

WASHINGTON, D.C. – October 7, 2014 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation on screening for type 2 diabetes, a potentially debilitating disease that has risen in prevalence over the past 15 years. The Task Force recommends screening adults at increased risk for type 2 diabetes with a blood sugar test to detect diabetes or abnormal blood glucose, also known as abnormal blood sugar. This is a grade B recommendation.

The Task Force is providing an opportunity for public comment on this draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review until November 3. All comments will be considered as the Task Force develops its final recommendation and final evidence review.

In 2012, 12 percent of American adults had diabetes and 37 percent had abnormal blood sugar levels that put them at increased risk for developing diabetes. Type 2 diabetes, which occurs when the body is not able to maintain a normal blood sugar level, is the most common type of diabetes in the United States. Abnormal blood sugar levels occur when the body does not consistently break down and use sugar, but it is not yet severe enough to be classified as type 2 diabetes.

“For people with abnormal blood sugar, changes in their lifestyle, such as eating healthier and exercising more often, can help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. The best way to do that is to participate in a program that supports these behaviors,” said Task Force member Michael Pignone, M.D., M.P.H. “That’s why we’re recommending that people who are at increased risk be screened.”

The Task Force recommends that all adults ages 45 and older be screened for diabetes and abnormal blood sugar.

“The major risk factors for diabetes and abnormal blood sugar are increasing age and obesity,” said Task Force member William Phillips, M.D., M.P.H. “Family history is another risk factor, such as having a parent, sibling, or child with type 2 diabetes. In women, risk factors also include a history of polycystic ovarian syndrome or of diabetes while pregnant. Certain racial and ethnic groups are also at increased risk.”

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 7 to November 3 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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