

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, Third Edition: Periodic Updates

Preface

New recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) are now being released periodically in looseleaf format. Unlike the first and second editions of the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services*, which were compiled only after the USPSTF had completed all of its recommendations, the third edition will be released incrementally to update several topics at a time as recommendations are completed. When the current USPSTF has completed all of its recommendations, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) plans to print them in a single, bound volume. Current and previous USPSTF recommendations, along with tables listing USPSTF-recommended preventive services, can also be found on the USPSTF Web site (<http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm>).

The USPSTF is in the midst of an ongoing and rigorous process of reviewing the evidence of effectiveness of a broad array of clinical preventive services—screening, counseling, and chemoprevention—updating many of its previous recommendations and releasing other recommendations for the first time. This first printing of the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, Third Edition: Periodic Updates* compiles for subscribers background information, summaries of the supporting evidence, and recommendations that were first published in *American Family Physician*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, and released on the AHRQ Web site (<http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm>). Recommendations and evidence summaries to be printed and mailed to subscribers in 2002 will focus on topics such as depression screening, colorectal cancer screening, hormone replacement therapy,

breast cancer screening, breast cancer chemoprevention, screening for osteoporosis, and counseling to promote physical activity, among others.

AHRQ convened the current USPSTF, an independent panel of private sector experts in primary care and prevention, in late 1998. The systematic evidence reviews that support the recommendations of the current Task Force are conducted by 2 AHRQ-supported Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs), one at Oregon Health & Science University and the other at Research Triangle Institute-University of North Carolina. In preparing the reviews, the EPCs conduct a comprehensive analysis of the research literature using state-of-the-art standards of evidence, and solicit the input of a broad array of federal and private reviewers. The USPSTF uses the reviews and comments, but guards its independence by separating the review of evidence from crafting recommendations. Final recommendations are based on the quality of the evidence and the relative balance of benefits and harms. Members of the current USPSTF represent the fields of family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, geriatrics, preventive medicine, public health, behavioral medicine, and nursing.

USPSTF recommendations have formed the basis of the clinical standards for many professional societies, health care organizations, and medical quality review groups. Previous editions of the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services* have been used widely in undergraduate and post-graduate medical and nursing education as a key reference for teaching preventive care. The work of the USPSTF has

helped establish the importance of including prevention in primary health care, ensuring insurance coverage for effective preventive services, and holding providers and health care systems accountable for delivering effective care. USPSTF recommendations highlight the opportunities for improving delivery of effective services and have helped others in narrowing gaps in the provision of preventive care in different populations.

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To order the *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, Third Edition: Periodic Updates* (Publication Number APPIP02-0001), call the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse: 1-800-358-9295 (outside the United States, call 410-358-3150), e-mail the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse (ahrqpubs@ahrq.gov), or visit the USPSTF Web site at www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm. The cost of the subscription is \$60.00.

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