

Summary of USPSTF Draft Recommendation

Interventions to Prevent Perinatal Depression

April 2025



What is this draft recommendation about?

Perinatal depression is a serious condition that develops during pregnancy or after childbirth and can negatively affect both maternal and infant health. For the mother, perinatal depression can cause trouble bonding with the baby and, though rare, an increase in the risk of suicide, suicidal thoughts, and thoughts of harming the child. For the baby, perinatal depression can increase the risk of preterm birth and low birthweight, impact mental and emotional development, and lead to the baby getting fewer preventive health services.

Interventions to prevent perinatal depression help to stop the condition before it develops. Counseling methods including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT) can help prevent perinatal depression in people at increased risk. During counseling sessions, patients engage in activities like education, goal setting, and role-playing, which help in developing skills that are proven to reduce symptoms of depression. CBT focuses on addressing negative thoughts and increasing positive activities. IPT focuses on a person's relationships with other people to improve communication and address problems.



What does the USPSTF recommend?



The USPSTF recommends that clinicians provide or refer those at increased risk of perinatal depression to counseling interventions during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

So, what does that mean?

Pregnant women and those who have recently given birth who are at increased risk for perinatal depression should be connected to counseling that helps prevent perinatal depression from developing.



Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation is for adolescents and adults who are pregnant or who have recently given birth and are at increased risk for perinatal depression. While there is no specific tool to decide who is at increased risk, healthcare professionals will consider and discuss with their patients things like experiences with mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety, physical or sexual abuse, social and financial challenges, and negative life events.



Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Perinatal depression affects up to 1 in 6 pregnancies.
- While anyone who is pregnant or has recently given birth can develop perinatal depression, certain women are at higher risk.
- Counseling during pregnancy and the postpartum period can help prevent perinatal depression in those who are at increased risk, improving their health and wellbeing while supporting the health of their babies.

Interventions to Prevent Perinatal Depression



What are the benefits?

Counseling helps those at increased risk of perinatal depression gain skills that are proven to reduce symptoms of depression, preventing perinatal depression before it develops. Preventing perinatal depression improves the health and wellbeing of those who are pregnant while supporting the health of their babies.



What are the harms?

Counseling is unlikely to cause harms.



Where can I learn more?

[Postpartum Depression](#) (Office on Women's Health)

[Perinatal Depression](#) (National Institute of Mental Health)

The [National Maternal Mental Health Hotline](#) is free, confidential, and available 24/7 in English and Spanish. Call or text **1-833-TLC-MAMA** or visit the website for tools and more.



How can I comment?

Visit the USPSTF [website](#) to read the full draft recommendation and submit a comment.



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between April 22, 2025, and May 19, 2025.



All comments will be considered as the Task Force finalizes the recommendation.