

# Understanding Task Force Draft Recommendations

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for the prevention of HIV infection. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from December 13, 2022, to January 17, 2023. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

## Pre-exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Pre-exposure Prophylaxis for the Prevention of HIV Infection*.

The Task Force recommends that people at increased risk of HIV be prescribed pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, to help prevent HIV infection.

The recommendation applies to teens and adults who do not have HIV but are at increased risk for getting it.

### Facts About HIV

HIV is a virus that attacks cells that help the body fight infection. Although HIV infection is treatable, it cannot be cured and can cause serious health concerns. HIV continues to be a public health issue, with about 1.2 million people in the U.S. currently living with HIV.

Factors that increase a person's risk for HIV include:

- having sex with someone who has HIV,
- having a recent sexually transmitted infection (STI),
- not using condoms consistently, especially with partners who are at increased risk, and
- sharing drug injection needles.

To determine a patient's risk for HIV, healthcare professionals need to talk with their patients about their sexual history and ask about injection drug use in an open and supportive way.

### Facts About PrEP to Prevent HIV

PrEP is a medication for people who do not have HIV but are at increased risk for getting it. There are now three different FDA-approved PrEP medications and are all safe and effective. Two medications are taken as a daily pill and one medication is an injection that starts monthly and then continues every other month. Healthcare professionals and their patients should decide together which PrEP medication is best based on the patient's individual situation.

PrEP is most effective when taken as prescribed. The Task Force encourages healthcare professionals to help their patients understand the importance of taking PrEP as prescribed and support them in doing so.

Many people who would benefit from PrEP are not receiving this highly effective medication. This is especially true among Black and Hispanic/Latino people, who are more likely to have HIV but are less likely to be taking PrEP than other people. This may be due to barriers such as lack of health insurance or less awareness that PrEP may be appropriate for them.

People who take PrEP need to be tested for HIV regularly to ensure that they continue not to have HIV. In addition, while PrEP helps prevent HIV, it does not prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). People who take PrEP should continue to use condoms, practice other safer sex behaviors, and be tested for STIs regularly.



### What is PrEP?

For the prevention of HIV, pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a medicine to lower the chance of getting HIV.

## Potential Benefits and Harms of PrEP to Prevent HIV Infection

The Task Force looked at the benefits and harms of PrEP for the prevention of HIV infection and found that PrEP is a safe and highly effective way to help prevent HIV in people at increased risk.

The benefits of using PrEP far outweigh the possible harms. Harms may include kidney problems, nausea, weight gain, and reactions at the site where a person got the PrEP shot. However, the Task Force found that these problems are often not serious and usually resolve over time.

## The Draft Recommendation on PrEP to Prevent HIV Infection: What Does It Mean?

Here is the Task Force's draft recommendation on PrEP to prevent HIV infection. It is based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of medication for this purpose. It is also based on the size of the potential benefits and harms. Task Force recommendation grades are explained in the box at the end of this fact sheet.

When the Task Force issues an **A Grade**, it recommends a preventive medication because it has more potential benefits than potential harms.

Before you send comments to the Task Force, you may want to read the [draft recommendation statement](#). The recommendation statement explains the evidence the Task Force reviewed and how it decided on the grade. An [evidence document](#) provides more detail about the scientific studies the Task Force reviewed.

**1** The USPSTF recommends that clinicians prescribe **pre-exposure prophylaxis** with effective **antiretroviral therapy** to persons who are at **increased risk** of HIV acquisition to decrease the risk of acquiring HIV infection. **A Grade**

## Notes

### **1** pre-exposure prophylaxis

For the prevention of HIV, medication taken to reduce the chance of getting HIV.

### antiretroviral therapy

For prevention of HIV, medication that can stop an HIV infection that's been introduced into the body from taking hold. Similar medication is used for treatment of HIV.

### increased risk

PrEP is for people who don't have HIV but are at increased risk of getting it. Factors that put someone at increased risk of HIV include having sex with someone who has HIV; having a recent STI; not using condoms consistently, especially with partners who are at increased risk; and sharing drug injection needles.

# PrEP for HIV Prevention




## What is the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force?

The Task Force is an independent, non-federal, volunteer group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force works to improve the health of people nationwide by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medicines. The recommendations apply to people with no signs or symptoms of the disease being discussed.

To develop a recommendation statement, Task Force members consider the best available science and research on a topic. For each topic, the Task Force posts draft documents for public comment, including a **draft recommendation statement**. All comments are reviewed and considered in developing the final recommendation statement. To learn more, visit the **Task Force website**.

USPSTF Recommendation Grades	
Grade	Definition
A	Recommended.
B	Recommended.
C	Recommendation depends on the patient's situation.
D	Not recommended.
I statement	There is not enough evidence to make a recommendation.

[Click Here to Learn More About PrEP to Prevent HIV](#)

-  **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis**  
(HIV.gov)
-  **PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)**  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
-  **Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Reduce HIV Risk**  
(National Institute of Allergy and Infection Diseases)

## [Click Here to Comment on the Draft Recommendation](#)



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between December 13, 2022 and January 17, 2023.



All comments will be considered for use in writing final recommendations.