

# Summary of USPSTF **Draft** Recommendation Screening for Syphilis Infection in Pregnant Persons

November 2024



## What is this draft recommendation about?

This recommendation focuses on **congenital syphilis**, which is when a person has syphilis while they are pregnant and passes it to their baby. When left untreated, congenital syphilis can cause serious complications for the baby, including premature birth, vision or hearing loss, and death.

**Screening for syphilis** involves a blood test taken by a healthcare professional.



## What does the USPSTF recommend?



The USPSTF recommends early screening for syphilis infection in all pregnant persons.

### ***So, what does that mean?***

All pregnant people should be screened for syphilis as early as possible, such as at their first prenatal visit or the first time they see a healthcare professional during pregnancy, to protect their health and the health of their baby.



## Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation applies to all pregnant women and pregnant people of all genders.

The Task Force has a separate recommendation for [screening for syphilis infection in teens and adults who are not pregnant](#).



## Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Cases of congenital syphilis are 10 times higher than they were a decade ago.
- Anyone who has unprotected sex is at risk for getting syphilis, so all pregnant people are at risk for syphilis and should be screened.
- Syphilis can cause serious health problems for both the pregnant person and their baby.
- It is essential that all pregnant people who screen positive receive timely, equitable, and evidence-based follow-up and treatment for syphilis.
- It is especially important to provide equitable care to Black, Hispanic, and Native American/Alaska Native pregnant people, who often experience healthcare barriers and are eight times more likely to have babies born with congenital syphilis.

# Screening for Syphilis Infection in Pregnant Persons



## What are the benefits?

Screening and treatment during pregnancy can help prevent babies from developing congenital syphilis or prevent babies from developing serious health complications. Screening and treatment also help keep the pregnant person healthy.



## What are the harms?

The Task Force found that the benefits of screening outweigh the potential harms. However, harms may include anxiety due to false positive test results, which show someone has syphilis when they do not. In addition, it is possible for the pregnant person to have an allergy or reaction to treatment.



## Where can I learn more?

[About Congenital Syphilis](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

[Congenital Syphilis](#) (MedlinePlus)

[About Syphilis](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

[Syphilis](#) (MedlinePlus)



## 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 November 19, 2024, and December 23, 2024.



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