

Summary of USPSTF Draft Recommendation

Behavioral Counseling Interventions to Support Breastfeeding

October 2024



What is this draft recommendation about?

Breastfeeding can improve the health of babies, including reducing the risk of infections, and may have health benefits for the person breastfeeding. Interventions to support breastfeeding include education and support from health professionals or peers.

- Education interventions increase knowledge about the benefits of breastfeeding and skills and management of common breastfeeding complications.
- Professional and peer support interventions provide mental, emotional, or direct support (such as assistance with latching).



What does the USPSTF recommend?



The USPSTF recommends providing or referring pregnant and postpartum persons to interventions that support breastfeeding.

So, what does that mean?

Healthcare professionals should provide or connect people who are pregnant or have recently given birth to education or support to help them breastfeed.



Who is this draft recommendation for?

This recommendation is for people of all genders who are pregnant or have recently given birth. The recommended interventions can also involve partners, family members, and friends.

This recommendation is not for infants with special nutrient or feeding needs, such as infants who are preterm or who have a metabolic disorder, or for breastfeeding parents infected with HIV. These parents and babies need specific guidance that is outside of this recommendation.



Why is this draft recommendation and topic important?

- Breastfeeding has proven health benefits for babies and may also have health benefits for the person breastfeeding, yet only just over half of babies in the United States are breastfed at 6 months.
- There are proven interventions, including education and support from both clinicians and peers that can help more mothers choose to breastfeed and increase how long they do so.
- The decision to breastfeed is a personal one and often affected by many social, cultural, and structural factors.
- When talking to new parents about breastfeeding, healthcare professionals should be mindful of these factors, and that not all people choose to, or are able to, breastfeed.

Behavioral Counseling Interventions to Support Breastfeeding



What are the benefits?

Interventions to support breastfeeding can help more mothers to breastfeed, increase how long they do so, and increase the number of babies fed only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life.

Breastfeeding can help babies stay healthy by reducing their risk of infections and making it less likely that they'll develop conditions like asthma.

Breastfeeding may also have health benefits for the person breastfeeding.



What are the harms?

The Task Force found few harms of interventions to support breastfeeding, but interventions may lead to greater feelings of anxiety and decreased confidence. This is why it is important that the interventions be supportive, have multiple touchpoints, and reflect that the decision to breastfeed is a personal one, and not every person chooses to, or is able to, breastfeed.



Where can I learn more?

[Breastfeeding and Breast Milk](#) (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

[Breastfeeding Recommendations and Guidance](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

[Breastfeeding](#) (Office on Women's Health)

[WIC Breastfeeding Support](#) (U.S. Department of Agriculture)



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 October 22, 2024, and November 18, 2024.



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