

This fact sheet explains the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's (Task Force) draft recommendation statement on screening for hypertension in adults. It also tells you how you can send comments about the draft recommendation to the Task Force. Comments may be submitted from June 23, 2020, to July 20, 2020. The Task Force welcomes your comments.

Screening for Hypertension in Adults

The Task Force issued a **draft recommendation statement** on *Screening for Hypertension in Adults*. The Task Force recommends that clinicians screen for hypertension in all adults. When someone's blood pressure is high at their doctor's office, they should talk

with their doctor to determine if they should have their blood pressure rechecked in settings outside of the office.

This recommendation applies to all adults ages 18 and older without known high blood pressure.

What is hypertension?

Hypertension is the chronic health condition of having repeated high blood pressure measurements over time and in various settings. If untreated, hypertension can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure.

Facts About Hypertension

Hypertension is very common, affecting almost half of adults in the United States, and is a major risk factor for many health conditions. Having hypertension increases a person's risk for heart attacks, strokes, and kidney failure. People usually cannot feel when their blood pressure is high, which is why screening for hypertension is important.

Factors that can increase a person's risk for hypertension include older age, African American race, a family history of hypertension, excess weight, lifestyle habits, and dietary factors.

There are different types of hypertension, but in this recommendation statement, the Task Force is referring to sustained hypertension. Sustained hypertension is the chronic health condition of having repeated high blood pressure readings in various settings. Understanding the type of hypertension a patient has affects the type of care clinicians will provide to them.

Facts About Screening for Hypertension

Clinicians can improve the health of their patients by screening all adults for hypertension. Screening for high blood pressure should first be performed in a doctor's office. Typically, blood pressure is measured by a clinician applying an inflatable cuff to the arm, with the patient in a seated position after five minutes of rest.

When someone has a high blood pressure measurement in the office, clinicians may want to get additional blood pressure measurements in other settings, such as at home, to decide how to best care for patients.

There are two options to check blood pressure at home using different types of devices:

- The first option allows the patient to measure their own blood pressure with a home cuff.
- The second option is to wear a programmed cuff that automatically takes the patient's blood pressure frequently over the course of the day and night.

Clinicians can work with patients to find which option works best for them.

Potential Benefits and Harms

The Task Force found that screening can detect hypertension early, leading to treatment that can help prevent heart attack, stroke, and other heart-related conditions. Screening for hypertension has few harms.

The Draft Recommendations on Screening for Hypertension: What Do They Mean?

Here is the Task Force's draft recommendation on screening for hypertension in adults. It is based on the quality and strength of the evidence about the potential benefits and harms of screening 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 screening because it has more potential benefits than potential harms.

Before you send comments to the Task Force, you may want to read the full [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 *screening for hypertension* in adults age 18 years or older with *office blood pressure measurement* (OBPM). The USPSTF recommends obtaining blood pressure measurements outside of the clinical setting for *diagnostic confirmation* before starting treatment. **(A Grade)**

Notes

1 *screening for hypertension*
Measuring a person's blood pressure for hypertension, the chronic health condition of having repeatedly high blood pressure measurements over time and in various settings.

office blood pressure measurement

Measuring someone's blood pressure using an arm cuff in the doctor's office.

diagnostic confirmation

A blood pressure reading taken after an initial high blood pressure measurement to verify if a person has hypertension.




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 all Americans 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 Screening for Hypertension

-  **High Blood Pressure**
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
-  **High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)**
(Food and Drug Administration)
-  **Get Your Blood Pressure Checked**
(Healthfinder.gov)

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



The Task Force welcomes comments on this draft recommendation.



Comments must be received between June 23, 2020 and July 20, 2020.



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