



Screening for Depression in Children and Adolescents: Clinical Summary

Population	Adolescents aged 12 to 18 y	Children aged ≤ 11 y
Recommendation	Screen for major depressive disorder (MDD). Adequate systems should be in place to ensure accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and appropriate follow-up. Grade: B	No recommendation. Grade: I (insufficient evidence)
Risk Assessment	Risk factors for MDD include female sex; older age; family (especially maternal) history of depression; prior episode of depression; other mental health or behavioral problems; chronic medical illness; overweight and obesity; and, in some studies, Hispanic race/ethnicity. Other psychosocial risk factors include childhood abuse or neglect, exposure to traumatic events (including natural disasters), loss of a loved one or romantic relationship, family conflict, uncertainty about sexual orientation, low socioeconomic status, and poor academic performance.	
Screening Tests	Two instruments which have been most often studied are the Patient Health Questionnaire for Adolescents and the primary care version of the Beck Depression Inventory.	
Screening Interval	The optimal interval for screening for MDD is not known. Opportunistic screening may be appropriate for adolescents, who may have infrequent health care visits.	
Treatment and Interventions	Treatment options for MDD include pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, collaborative care, psychosocial support interventions, and complementary and alternative medicine approaches.	
Balance of Benefits and Harms	Screening for MDD in adolescents aged 12 to 18 y has a moderate net benefit.	The evidence on screening for MDD in children aged ≤ 11 y is insufficient, and the balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.
Other Relevant USPSTF Recommendations	The USPSTF has made recommendations on screening for suicide risk in adolescents, adults, and older adults. Other USPSTF recommendations on mental health topics pertaining to children and adolescents, including illicit drug and alcohol use, can be found on the USPSTF Web site (www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org).	

For a summary of the evidence systematically reviewed in making this recommendation, the full recommendation statement, and supporting documents, please go to www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org.