

## Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Screening for Latent Tuberculosis Infection

*People at increased risk for tuberculosis should be screened*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 22, 2022 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement on screening for latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Adults at increased risk for tuberculosis (TB) should be screened for LTBI. **This is a B grade.**

### Grade in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

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Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection spread through the air from one person to another that usually affects the lungs. It is a significant public health concern in the United States. People can be infected with TB bacteria but not have any signs or symptoms; this is known as LTBI. If left untreated, people with LTBI can progress to active TB, which can cause serious health problems and spread to others.

“The Task Force continues to recommend that people at increased risk for tuberculosis be screened for latent tuberculosis infection,” says Task Force member Gbenga Ogedegbe, M.D., M.P.H. “Screening is an effective way to identify those who have a latent TB infection so that it can be treated before it progresses to active TB.”

There are two types of screening tests for LTBI in the United States: the tuberculin skin test and interferon-gamma release assay, which is a blood test. Both tests have been shown to be safe and effective. It is important that those who screen positive go on to receive appropriate follow-up and treatment. For people diagnosed with LTBI, antibiotic treatments can help clear the infection safely and effectively so that it does not progress to active TB.

“Because latent tuberculosis infection does not cause signs or symptoms, it is important that people who are at increased risk for tuberculosis be screened,” says Task Force member Michael Cabana, M.D., M.A., M.P.H. “The Task Force’s recommendation focuses on two audiences: people born or who have lived in countries with increased rates of TB and those who have lived in certain group settings, like prisons or homeless shelters.”

In the United States, the majority of active TB cases occur in people born outside of the country. In 2020, Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, and China were the most common countries of birth among people living in the United States with new cases of TB. Most new TB cases are thought to be due to the progression of LTBI to active TB rather than the transmission of active TB. Therefore, screening for and treating LTBI are critical to reducing the burden of TB.

The Task Force’s draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review have been posted for public comment on the Task Force website at [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org). Comments can be submitted from November 22, 2022, to December 27, 2022, at [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm).

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of people nationwide by making evidence-based

recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

Dr. Ogedegbe is the inaugural and founding director of the Institute for Excellence in Health Equity at NYU Langone Health. He is the Dr. Adolph and Margaret Berger Professor of Medicine and Population Health at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. Dr. Ogedegbe is a member of the National Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Cabana is a general pediatrician and professor of pediatrics and the chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is also physician-in-chief at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore.

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