

## U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes Screening in Youth

*More research is needed to recommend for or against screening in children and teens without symptoms*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 14, 2021 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement on screening for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents. The Task Force determined there is not enough evidence to make a recommendation for or against screening. **This is an I statement.**

This recommendation applies to children and teens under the age of 18 who have not been previously diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes and who do not have signs or symptoms of either condition.

### Grade in this recommendation:

I: The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

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Diabetes affects how the body controls or uses glucose, or blood sugar. Type 2 diabetes is when the body does not properly use insulin and isn't able to keep blood sugar at a normal level. When blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes, a person has prediabetes. While type 2 diabetes was once considered a health condition only found in adults, the number of children and teens with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes is rising, most likely due to increasing rates of overweight and obesity.

"This is the first time the Task Force reviewed the evidence on whether screening youth for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes leads to improvements in health," says Task Force member Michael Cabana, M.D., M.A., M.P.H. "Unfortunately, there is very limited evidence, so we are calling for more research on this important topic. Clinicians should use their judgment when determining whether or not to screen children and teens for diabetes."

Youth who have obesity and carry excess weight, especially in the midsection, are at the highest risk for developing prediabetes or type 2 diabetes. Family history is also a strong risk factor. It is important to note that there are significant health disparities among people who have type 2 diabetes.

"American Indian, Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, and Latino youth are at a significantly higher risk than White youth of developing type 2 diabetes," says Task Force member Martha Kubik, Ph.D., R.N. "It is essential that future research include these youth who are at higher risk so we can improve health equity related to diabetes."

While there is limited evidence on screening for prediabetes and diabetes in youth, it is important for children and teens to be physically active and have a healthy diet. This can help maintain a healthy weight and lower the risk of diabetes.

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 December 14, 2021, to January 18, 2022, at [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm). Note the public comment period has been expanded from the standard four weeks to five weeks to account for the holidays.

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. 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.

Dr. Kubik is a professor and director of the School of Nursing, College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University. She is a nurse scientist, active researcher, and past standing member of the National Institutes of Health's Community-Level Health Promotion Study Section. Dr. Kubik is an advanced practice nurse and fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

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