

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Finds Insufficient Evidence on Screening for Vitamin D Deficiency in Adults

More research needed to assess harms and benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 25, 2014 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today published a final recommendation statement and evidence summary on screening for vitamin D deficiency in adults. The Task Force concluded that there is not enough evidence to determine if the benefits outweigh the harms of screening adults for vitamin D deficiency. This is an I statement.

This final recommendation applies to generally healthy adults who do not have signs or symptoms of vitamin D deficiency. It does not apply to people who have conditions that require extra vitamin D, pregnant women, or people who live in a nursing home.

“The Task Force recognizes the increasing interest in how vitamin D impacts health. However, there is not enough clear evidence at this time for us to recommend for or against screening for vitamin D deficiency,” says Task Force member Linda Baumann, Ph.D., R.N.

Vitamin D is an important nutrient for keeping bones healthy. Levels can become too low if an individual doesn’t eat enough vitamin D–rich foods, has very little exposure to sunlight, or has health conditions that prevent the body from absorbing or using vitamin D.

“More research is needed to help the Task Force determine the benefits and harms of screening for vitamin D deficiency,” says Task Force co-vice chair Albert L. Siu, M.D., M.S.P.H.

The Task Force identified a number of areas where additional research is needed to make a future recommendation for or against vitamin D deficiency screening. For example, more research is needed to build a clearer understanding of how to define vitamin D deficiency, and to determine the accuracy of screening tests.

The Task Force’s recommendation has been published online in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, as well as on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. A fact sheet that explains the recommendation statement in plain language is also available. A draft version of this recommendation was available for public comment in July 2014.

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

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