

# Screening

## Depression

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force  
Update, 2002 Release

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Summary of Recommendations <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstf/uspstf/uspstfdepr.htm>

- **The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening adults for depression in clinical practices that have systems in place to assure accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and followup. [B recommendation](#).**  
*Rationale:* The USPSTF found good evidence that screening improves the accurate identification of depressed patients in primary care settings and that treatment of depressed adults identified in primary care settings decreases clinical morbidity. Trials that have directly evaluated the effect of screening on clinical outcomes have shown mixed results. Small benefits have been observed in studies that simply feed back screening results to clinicians. Larger benefits have been observed in studies in which the communication of screening results is coordinated with effective followup and treatment. The USPSTF concluded the benefits of screening are likely to outweigh any potential harms.
- **The USPSTF concludes the evidence is insufficient to recommend for or against routine screening of children or adolescents for depression. [I recommendation](#).**  
*Rationale:* The USPSTF found limited evidence on the accuracy and reliability of screening tests in children and adolescents and limited evidence on the effectiveness of therapy in children and adolescents identified in primary care settings.

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[Guide to Clinical Preventive Services, 3rd Edition: Periodic Updates](#) (available early 2003)

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[Summary of the Evidence](#) (PDF file, 136 KB)

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