

USPSTF urges behavioral counseling to prevent STIs

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

recommends behavioral counseling interventions for preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in adolescents and adults at increased risk. These recommendations form the basis of a final recommendation statement published in the Aug. 18 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Jillian T. Henderson, Ph.D., M.P.H., from the Kaiser Permanente Evidence-Based Practice Center in Portland, Oregon, and colleagues updated evidence for the USPSTF on the effectiveness of behavioral [counseling](#) interventions for preventing STIs in a review including 37 randomized trials and two nonrandomized controlled intervention studies with 65,888 participants. The researchers found that in 19 trials that reported STI diagnoses as the outcomes, [intervention](#) was associated with reduced STI incidence (odds ratio, 0.66). Interventions were associated with change in self-reported behavior (e.g., increased use of condoms) that could reduce STI risk (odds ratio, 1.31) in 34 trials with 21,417 participants.

Based on these findings, the USPSTF concludes with moderate certainty that the likelihood of acquiring STIs in sexually active adolescents and in adults at increased risk was reduced with behavioral counseling interventions, resulting in a moderate net benefit (B recommendation).

"By providing behavioral counseling interventions to those at risk for STIs, clinicians can make a real difference for their patients," USPSTF chair Alex Krist, M.D., M.P.H., said in a statement. "If these interventions are provided widely, this counseling has the potential to reduce STI rates by approximately a third."

More information: [Evidence Report](#)
[Final Recommendation Statement](#)
[Editorial \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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