



Recommendations for Eating Disorder Screening in Adolescents and Adults



The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recently released their recommendations on screening for eating disorders in primary care. Make sure you know about the need for regular screenings and why they are important.

Task Force Findings

The USPSTF found that not enough research has been conducted for them to say whether everyone should have regular screenings. They do not recommend against screening -- instead, the evidence highlights important gaps in our understanding.

Despite these gaps in our knowledge, routine screening may be impactful for patients in primary care to improve health outcomes.



Why You Should Screen Every Person for Eating Disorders



Primary care providers are in a unique position to discover signs and symptoms of eating disorders.

The need for regular screening is urgent and real. As many as 30 million Americans have eating disorders.^{1,2}

Many individuals do not show obvious signs or symptoms. If they are not diagnosed early, the eating disorders can worsen.

Many national organizations advocate for screening in clinical settings:

- ✔ The American Academy of Pediatrics
- ✔ The Academy for Eating Disorders
- ✔ The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- ✔ The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

If you work in primary care or community-based settings, you can make a difference. Screen for eating disorders as early as possible.

Free, Simple Screening Tool for Primary Care Settings

There is a free, effective, easy-to-use screening tool you can use in real time while a patient is in your office.

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Eating Disorders (SBIRT-ED)

- ✔ Get real-time screening results
- ✔ Learn how to talk with your patients about eating disorders
- ✔ Make referrals to specialty care



Visit eatingdisorderscreener.org

How can we improve care for eating disorders?

Conduct new research studies

- ✔ Understand the benefits or harms of routine screening for individuals who show no symptoms
- ✔ Recruit subjects in minority groups to better reflect actual patient populations
- ✔ Develop accurate screening tools for children and adolescents

Offer training to primary care providers on eating disorders

- ✔ Challenge stereotypes about the kinds of patients who are at risk
- ✔ Offer frequent, easy-to-access, and engaging courses (e.g., the [NCEED Training Center](#))
- ✔ Equip providers with tools to launch treatment and referral options (e.g., the [SBIRT-ED tool](#))

Help primary care providers uncover eating disorders sooner

- ✔ Integrate mental health screenings into primary care
- ✔ Provide a list of therapy and [specialized resources](#) for patients
- ✔ Teach primary care providers how to talk to patients about their symptoms

The [SBIRT-ED tool](#) provides conversation guides for providers to use with patients who screen positive for an eating disorder



To read more about the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendations, visit <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/screening-eating-disorders-adolescents-adults>

Source:
1. <https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/Services/Pediatric-and-Adolescent-Medicine/Adolescent-and-Young-Adult-Specialty-Clinic/Eating-Disorders/Eating-Disorder-Facts>
2. <http://eatingdisorderscoalition.org.s208556.gridserver.com/couch/uploads/file/Eating%20Disorders%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

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