

2021 RECOMMENDATION UPDATE SUMMARY

Counseling for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

JANUARY 2022

WHAT DOES THE WPSI RECOMMEND?

For **all** sexually active adolescents and adult women at an increased risk for STIs:

Behavioral counseling to reduce the risk of STIs.

For adult women without identified risk factors:

Behavioral counseling should be considered on an individual basis as determined by clinical judgment.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS TO IDENTIFY THOSE AT INCREASED RISK FOR STIS?

Risk factors include—but are not limited to—age younger than 25 years, a recent history of an STI, a new sex partner, multiple partners, a partner with concurrent partners, a partner with an STI, and a lack of or inconsistent condom use.

WHAT'S NEW?

The updated clinical recommendation is consistent with the 2016 WPSI recommendation.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN IMPLEMENTING THIS RECOMMENDATION?

Behavioral counseling includes, but is not limited to, counseling sessions with adequate contact time (effectiveness is greatest with high-contact interventions) and may include multiple counseling sessions, group sessions, in-person, and tech-based encounters, and educational and behavioral change components using motivational interviewing techniques and goal setting.

The WPSI recommends STI counseling regardless of whether STI screening occurs during the same visit and regardless of the type of sexual activity or gender of the sexual partner(s). Counseling may occur annually or more frequently based on individual risk factors. Intensity of counseling may be individualized based on risk factors.

Clinicians should consider the cultural and linguistic needs of individual patients and maintain their privacy and confidentiality. Counseling should be respectful, affirming, and nonstigmatizing.

WHAT ARE OTHER RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS?

The WPSI has issued recommendations on [screening for human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\) infection](#).

The USPSTF has issued recommendations on screening for HIV, including:

- [Sexually Transmitted Infections: Behavioral Counseling](#)
- [Screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea](#)
- [Human Immunodeficiency Virus \(HIV\) Infection: Screening](#)
- [Prevention of Human Immunodeficiency Virus \(HIV\) Infection: Preexposure Prophylaxis](#)

AAP/Bright Futures has issued recommendations on [STIs and HIV](#).

WHERE TO READ THE FULL RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT?

Visit the WPSI website to read the [full recommendation](#). This includes more details on implementation considerations, research recommendations, and the full evidence summary.

WHAT WPSI RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

- [Well-Woman Chart](#)
- [Clinical Summary Tables](#)
- [Coding Guide](#)
- [Patient Education Materials](#)

ABBREVIATIONS:

WPSI = Women's Preventive Services Initiative

STI = sexually transmitted infection

USPSTF = United States Preventive Services Task Force

WPSI recommends and encourages access to and provision of respectful, gender-affirming, high-quality, and safe health care. Please see our [gender inclusivity statement](#) for more information.

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