

USPSTF reaffirms screening for syphilis in pregnancy

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

recommends screening all pregnant women for syphilis infection. These findings form the basis of a reaffirmation recommendation statement published in the Sept. 4 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Using data from seven studies, Jennifer S. Lin, M.D., from Kaiser Permanente Research Affiliates in Portland, Ore., and colleagues conducted a systematic review on the effectiveness and harms of [screening](#) for syphilis in [pregnancy](#) and the harms of penicillin treatment in pregnancy.

The researchers observed an increase in screening for syphilis in all [pregnant women](#) from 2002 to 2012, from 89.8 to 97.2 percent, and a decrease in the incidence of [congenital syphilis](#) from 109.3 to 9.4 cases per 100,000 live births. No studies identified harms of penicillin during pregnancy. Using a reaffirmation process, the USPSTF found that accurate screening algorithms identify syphilis infection. Congenital syphilis can be prevented with effective treatment with antibiotics, significantly decreasing adverse pregnancy outcomes, with small associated harms. Based on these findings, the USPSTF reaffirms that there is convincing evidence that screening for syphilis infection in pregnancy provides considerable benefit.

"Treatment is most effective when it is done early, so we strongly recommend that all women be screened as early in their pregnancy as possible," USPSTF member Melissa A. Simon, M.D., M.P.H., said in a statement.

More information: [Recommendation Statement](#)
[Evidence Report](#)
[Editorial](#)

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