

CONSENSUS CANCER SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AVERAGE-RISK INDIVIDUALS

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and many professional societies have evidence-based recommendations about the use of cancer screening tests among individuals who are at **average risk** of developing the cancers being screened for. Here, we highlight consensus, as of July 31, 2019, among these recommendations from the USPSTF, the American Cancer Society (ACS), the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), the American College of Physicians (ACP), the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG), and the American Urologists Association (AUA). Not all of the professional societies have recommendations for every cancer screening test.

Breast Cancer Screening

There is consensus among the ACOG, ACP, ACS, and USPSTF that women ages 50–74 who are at average risk of developing breast cancer should have regular screening mammograms. However, there is variability about whether this screening should be done every year or every other year.

Some recommend starting regular screening mammograms before age 50. It is important to note, however, that all the groups support women ages 40–49 having the opportunity to have regular screening mammograms if they decide it is right for them.

Cervical Cancer Screening

There is consensus among the ACOG, ACS, ACP, and USPSTF that:

- average-risk women younger than 21 should not be screened;
- average-risk women ages 21–29 should have a Pap test every 3 years;
- average-risk women ages 30–65 should have either a Pap test every 3 years, a Pap test and human papillomavirus (HPV) testing every 5 years, or HPV testing alone every 5 years; and
- women older than 65 should not be screened if they are at average risk of the disease because they have previously had regular screenings with normal results and are not otherwise at high risk of developing cervical cancer.

Colorectal Cancer Screening

There is consensus among the ACS, ACP, NCCN, and USPSTF that adults ages 50–75 who are at average risk of developing colorectal cancer should be screened. How often a person should be screened depends on the screening test used (see sidebar on **How Can We Screen for Cancer?** p. 42).

Some professional societies recommend starting regular screening before age 50 and some recommend certain screening approaches over others. The overall message, however, is that using any of the approved tests is better than not being screened and that average-risk adults should consult with their health care providers to decide when to start screening and to choose the test that is right for them.

Prostate Cancer Screening

There is consensus among the ACS, ACP, AUA, and USPSTF that men ages 55–69 who are at average risk of developing prostate cancer talk to a physician about the benefits and potential harms of prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing before deciding if screening is right for them.

Some of the professional societies have additional recommendations that cover people who fall outside the age groups highlighted here and people who are at increased risk for the cancers highlighted here. To find out more about cancer screening recommendations see: <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/>, <http://www.cancer.org/>, <http://m.acog.org/>, <https://www.auanet.org/>, <https://www.acponline.org/>, and <https://www.nccn.org/>.

Adapted from (36).