Task Force Recommends Hep B Tests For Those At Risk

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The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recommended screening for those at high risk of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, MedPage Today reports. Publishing the recommendation in Annals of Internal Medicine, the task force has moved away from its 2004 stance that the test's potential harms trumped its potential benefits.

The change in policy, which was prompted in part by increasing evidence of the apparent benefits of suppressing hep B, brings USPSTF into the same camp as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases and the Institute of Medicine.

In addition to pregnant women, for whom USPSTF recommended screening in 2009, the high risk categories include:

- Those born in countries with a 2 percent or greater hep B prevalence.
- Those born in the US who were not vaccinated during infancy and whose parents emigrated from a country with a high hep B prevalence.
- People living with HIV.
- Injection drug users.
- Those who have household contact with someone living with hep B.
- Men who have sex with men.

To read the MedPage Today story, click here.

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