

Updates Released for ACA Preventive Services

January 2022

On January 10, 2022, the United States Preventive Services Task Force and the Health Resources and Services Administration released updated guidance (Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Part 51) on Affordable Care Act (ACA) preventive services with respect to colonoscopies and services for women and children.

Follow-Up Colonoscopies. Group health plans and health insurance issuers are required to cover in-network with no cost-sharing a follow-up colonoscopy after a patient has received a positive screening test or direct visualization test. The follow-up colonoscopy is considered an integral part of the preventive screening, requiring coverage to complete the necessary screening. The effective date for this coverage is plan years beginning on or after May 31, 2022 (January 1, 2023, for calendar year plans).

Obesity Prevention. Group health plans and issuers must also cover in-network with no cost-sharing counseling for women aged 40 to 60 years with normal or overweight body mass index to maintain weight or limit weight gain to prevent obesity. Counseling may include individualized discussion of healthy eating and physical activity. The effective date for this coverage is plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2023.

Women's Preventive Care. Effective for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2023, updates to existing guidelines for women's preventive services include:

- Coverage for breastfeeding services and supplies, including double electric breast pumps and breast milk storage supplies, as well as equipment and supplies clinically appropriate for mothers with breastfeeding difficulties.
- Contraceptive care updates include screening, education, counseling, and provision of contraceptives and follow-up care. Contraceptive care is expanded to include Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved, granted, or cleared contraceptives, effective family planning practices, and sterilization procedures.
 - Plans and issuers are reminded of their obligation to provide coverage in-network with no cost-sharing of FDA-approved contraceptives, determined to be medically appropriate by the patient's attending provider and that barriers to such coverage violates the ACA.
- Counseling for sexually transmitted infections is expanded to include those adolescents and women not identified as high risk but are determined in the clinician's judgment to reduce risk of infection.
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) screening guidelines include risk assessments and prevention education, early or additional screenings based on risk, and rescreening at least annually for women aged 13 or older with increased risk of HIV infection.



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- Well-woman preventive visits include pre-pregnancy, prenatal, postpartum, and interpregnancy visits. Preventive services may be completed as either a single visit or over a series of visits.

Children’s Preventive Care. Effective for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2023, updates to existing guidelines for children under the Bright Futures Program include:

- Universal screening for suicide risk to the depression screening category for ages 12 to 21.
- New guidance for behavioral, social, and emotional screening for newborns to age 21.
- New guidelines for assessing risk of cardiac arrest or death for ages 11 to 21.
- New guidelines for assessing risk of hepatitis B infection in newborns to age 21.

Resources

The news release is available [here](#).

FAQs Part 51 can be found [here](#).

Information about the women’s preventive services guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

For details on the preventive services guidelines for children, visit the Bright Futures Program website [here](#).



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