

New Comprehensive Coverage for Women's Preventive Care

The Affordable Care Act helps make prevention affordable and accessible for all Americans by requiring new health plans to cover and eliminate cost sharing for preventive services recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Bright Futures Guidelines recommended by the Academy of Pediatrics.

The law also requires insurance companies to cover additional preventive health benefits for women. For the first time, the Department of Health and Human Services is adopting new guidelines for women's preventive services to fill the gaps in current preventive services guidelines for women's health, ensuring a comprehensive set of preventive services for women.

The eight new additional women's preventive services that will be covered without cost-sharing requirements include:

- **Well-woman visits:** This would include an annual well-woman preventive care visit for adult women to obtain the recommended preventive services, and additional visits if women and their health care providers determine they are necessary. These visits will help women and their health care providers determine what preventive services are appropriate, and set up a plan to help women get the care they need to be healthy.
- **Gestational diabetes screening:** This screening is for women 24 to 28 weeks pregnant, and those at high risk of developing gestational diabetes. It will help improve the health of mothers and babies because women who have gestational diabetes have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the future. In addition, the children of women with gestational diabetes are at significantly increased risk of being overweight and insulin-resistant throughout childhood.
- **HPV DNA testing:** Women who are 30 or older will have access to high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) DNA testing every three years, regardless of Pap smear results. Early screening,

detection, and treatment have been shown to help reduce the prevalence of cervical cancer.

- **STI counseling:** Sexually-active women will have access to annual counseling on sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- **HIV screening and counseling:** Sexually-active women will have access to annual counseling on HIV.
- **Contraception and contraceptive counseling:** Women will have access to all Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptive methods, sterilization procedures, and patient education and counseling. These recommendations do not include abortifacient drugs.
- **Breastfeeding support, supplies, and counseling:** Pregnant and postpartum women will have access to comprehensive lactation support and counseling from trained providers, as well as breastfeeding equipment. Breastfeeding is one of the most effective preventive measures mothers can take to protect their health and that of their children.
- **Interpersonal and domestic violence screening and counseling:** Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence should be provided for all adolescent and adult women.