

# No benefit from routine thyroid cancer screening: task force

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(HealthDay)—Doctors should not screen for thyroid cancer in patients who have no symptoms of the disease, according to a U.S. Preventive Services Task Force draft recommendation.

It reaffirms a recommendation issued 20 years ago.

Thyroid cancer is rare in the United States. In 2016, an estimated 64,300 new cases will be diagnosed, representing 3.8 percent of all new cancers. The thyroid is a small gland in the neck that play a key role in controlling metabolism.

"While there is very little evidence of the benefits of screening for thyroid cancer, there is considerable evidence of the significant harms of treatment," said task force member Karina Davidson. She is director of the Center for Behavioral Cardiovascular Health at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City.

"And in the places where [universal screening](#) has

been tried, it hasn't helped people live longer, healthier lives," she added in a task force news release.

Studies from several countries suggest widespread [thyroid cancer](#) screening leads to overdiagnosis, said task force chairwoman Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo. She is a professor of medicine, epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco.

"People who are treated for small or slow-growing tumors are exposed to risks from surgery or radiation, but do not receive any benefit because the tumors are unlikely to affect the person's health during their lifetime," she said in the news release.

The task force is accepting public comments on the draft recommendation through Dec. 26.

The [task force](#) is an independent, volunteer panel made up of U.S. experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine.

**More information:** The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [thyroid cancer](#).

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