Why a Pediatrician Group Recommends HIV Tests for All Youth

December 10, 2015

The 'Today' show discusses new HIV testing guidelines for youth.

A new set of guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics says that all teens should be tested for HIV at least once between ages 16 and 18, not just those considered at high risk. The AAP's "2016 Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care" is included in the January issue of Pediatrics.

The AAP guidelines cover children from birth to age 21. In addition to suggesting universal HIV tests, the group also now recommends preventive screenings for high cholesterol, depression, and drug and alcohol abuse at various ages and frequencies.

As Natalie Azar, MD, pointed out on the Today show, the reasoning behind recommending HIV testing is that one in four new HIV infections occur among people between ages 13 and 24, and that 60 percent of these young HIV-positive people don't know their status.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already recommends universal HIV screening between the ages of 13 and 24, Azar said.

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