

South Dakota High School Student Athlete Cardiac Health Requirements

Purpose

To ensure early identification of cardiac risk factors in student athletes and support safe participation in high school sports across South Dakota.

Pre-Participation Physical Exam Requirements

- A physical exam is required at least once every 3 years.
- An annual Health History form must be completed in the off-years.
- School districts may require more frequent exams.
- Exams must be completed by a licensed provider (MD, DO, PA, NP, or DC).

Cardiac-Related Components of the Physical

- Evaluation of heart sounds, murmurs, rhythm abnormalities, and pulses.
- Assessment of symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, fainting, or palpitations during exercise.
- Review of any previous cardiac testing (ECG, echocardiogram).
- Referral for additional testing or to a cardiologist if concerns or abnormal findings are present.

Evaluation of Student & Family Cardiac Health History

- Fainting, chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations during exercise.
- Unexplained light-headedness or episodes of near-collapse.
- Previous cardiac diagnoses or evaluations.
- Family history of sudden cardiac death before age 35, genetic heart conditions (such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy or long QT syndrome), or early pacemaker/defibrillator placement.

Provider Clearance & Documentation

- Providers indicate if a student is fully cleared, cleared with restrictions, or requires further evaluation.
- Forms must be signed by a parent/guardian and retained according to district and state privacy requirements.

School Responsibilities

- Ensure all required forms are submitted before participation.
- Provide families with educational materials on cardiac risk and sudden cardiac arrest.
- Maintain an emergency response plan with AED access and trained staff.

Recognition of Red-Flag Symptoms

- Fainting or near-fainting during or after exercise.
- Exercise-induced chest pain or discomfort.
- New or unexplained palpitations.

- Excessive shortness of breath or fatigue not proportional to conditioning.
- Significant family history of early cardiac disease or sudden death.

Goal

To reduce the risk of sudden cardiac events in student athletes through consistent screening, education, and timely medical follow-up.

References

- [ATH-PhysicalExamsHealthIssues.pdf](#)
- [ATH-PhysicalExamsENG.pdf](#)