

Heart Screening

What to expect

This handout explains heart screening appointments at the Sports Medicine Center at Husky Stadium.

What is a heart screening?

A heart screening (also called a *cardiac screen*) assesses the health of your heart and blood vessels (*cardiovascular system*). It involves a full heart health history, physical exam, and resting *electrocardiogram* (ECG). A resting ECG shows your heart's electrical rhythm when you are relaxed.

Why should I have a heart screening?

A heart screening can tell your provider if you have some of the conditions linked to *sudden cardiac arrest* in young athletes. Sudden cardiac arrest is the sudden, unexpected loss of heart function, breathing, and consciousness. **It is the #1 killer of young athletes in the U.S. during sports activities.** It can occur without any warning.

What can I expect?

Heart screening appointments take about 30 minutes. During your appointment, we will:

- Check your blood pressure, height, and weight
- Ask you about any heart symptoms
- Give you a symptom and family health history form to fill out
- Do a heart-focused physical exam
- Do a resting ECG

Resting ECG

For your resting ECG, you will lie on an exam table. We will place sticky patches (*electrodes*) on your chest, arms, and legs. These will record the electrical rhythm of your heart and print out



A heart screening includes a resting electrocardiogram, which records the electrical activity of your heart when you are relaxed.

a *tracing*. An ECG tracing is a graph of your heart's activity. Our providers will review the tracing with you.

Who should have a heart screening?

Anyone over age 12 can have a heart screening at the Sports Medicine Center. Heart screenings are most often given to young athletes who compete in sports.

A heart screening can also be part of a complete physical exam that is done before starting a sports activity. This kind of exam will last longer than 30 minutes.

The Sports Medicine Center does not provide heart screenings to children under the age of 12.

Do I need a full heart assessment?

We suggest you make an appointment for a full heart assessment if you:

- Are age 12 to 30 and have symptoms of heart problems
- Have already been diagnosed with a heart condition and want a second opinion about taking part in sports and exercise
- Are over 30 years old and want a heart screening before you start an athletic activity

What other tests may be needed?

Other tests may be needed if you have:

- Symptoms of heart problems
- A family history of heart disease
- Abnormal results on your ECG or physical exam

Your provider may refer you for an *echocardiogram* (ultrasound of the heart) or other tests, or to see a *cardiology* (heart) specialist.

Is a heart screening covered by insurance?

Heart screenings are not usually covered by insurance. A heart screening appointment costs \$50.

Appointments to assess your heart symptoms or to get more testing to confirm a diagnosis are usually covered by insurance.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UW Medicine Sports
Medicine Center: Call
206.598.DAWG (3294) and
press 8.