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 *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 *cardiologist* (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.