

FORM A

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Enclosed is an information packet for your child's sport's history and physical examination. The purpose of this exam is to detect any conditions that may increase your child's risk of injury or death while practicing or competing in his or her sport. Although there are many beneficial aspects of participating in high school sports (improved self-image, self-motivation and health habits), as with any activity there are some associated risks. Overall, the risk of death in high school sports is extremely low; fewer high school students die due to their sports each year than in automobile accidents. In recent years there have been an average of 20 to 40 non-traumatic deaths in high school sports each year, or one per 100,000 to 200,000 student athletes per year.

The major causes of non-traumatic deaths in sports are heart problems, with a syndrome called "Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM)" being the most common. Fortunately, not all athletes with HCM are at risk for sudden death. Our goal is to identify those student-athletes who may be at risk. Currently, the method for doing this is by having a physician perform a specific "Preparticipation Exam" (PPE). By taking the appropriate history and performing the appropriate physical, we can detect some of the student-athletes at risk for sudden death. Unfortunately, this is not a perfect system and some athletes with HCM will be missed and many others without HCM or other heart problems will be referred for other tests, which will turn out to be normal.

Other parts of the history and physical focus on areas that may not lead to death but are more commonly associated with problems. The musculoskeletal and neurologic history and exam is critical in detecting old injuries or other problems that need special attention in order to prevent future injuries.

The final role of the PPE is to provide the student-athlete with a chance to ask a physician health related questions and receive some health counseling. While this exam is very limited and should not replace a regular visit to his or her personal doctor, the limited contact that young adults have with doctors is a recognized fact. Therefore, this provides a much needed opportunity for young athletes to have contact with a physician.

We hope that this letter explains some of the reasons that this history and physical is so important and we urge you to take the time to complete the history form carefully.

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