

Take time out now for school sports physicals

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(HealthDay)—Most states require school athletes to have a sports physical, and now is the time to book it, doctors say.

These physicals can reveal [health problems](#) that could impair athletic performance or even pose a risk of injury or death, according to Dr. John Higgins. He's a professor of medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

"They help us determine the health of students, their ability to participate in the sport, what could potentially cause an injury, as well as their overall fitness level and how they can perform under a [stressful situation](#)," Higgins said in a university news release.

Higgins is also a sports cardiologist for Rice University Athletics and the NBA's Houston Rockets.

Sports physicals typically focus on the cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and neurological systems.

These exams include: a review of the student's medical history; a thorough physical examination; assessment of strength, flexibility and posture; screening for eating disorders, anxiety or other mental disorders; and drug, energy drink or alcohol abuse.

Students are also asked about exercise-related symptoms—such as shortness of breath, feeling like they may pass out, or tiring easily—that may indicate underlying disease or heart conditions.

For those with a personal or family history of heart problems, doctors may advise getting an electrocardiogram, which checks the electrical and muscular functions of the heart.

Students can get a sports physical from their primary care doctor. In addition, many public school districts partner with hospitals, health systems or local [health](#) providers to provide low-cost sports physicals.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more about [kids and sports](#).

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