

# A parent's playbook for sports screenings

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Summer is winding down, and soon kids will be heading onto the field to play their favorite fall sports. But before they can check into the game, they have to head into the doctor's office for sports screenings.

It's generally required that young athletes get a preparticipation exam

before participating in organized activities. The exams aren't just a formality. It's to ensure your child's safety and check to see if they are physically able to play.

Dr. Matthew Anastasi, a Mayo Clinic sports medicine physician, explains what parents should look for when it comes to sports exams.

"It's very important to identify any potential risk that they may be exposed to before their participation in the respective sport," says Dr. Anastasi.

A typical sports [screening](#) includes assessing vision, heart and lungs. Sports medicine specialists also will look at the joints.

"Really focusing on all the [joints](#), ranging from neck, shoulders, elbows, and then moving down to lower extremity hips, knees, ankles," says Dr. Anastasi.

A thorough exam also includes going over medical and [family history](#). This will help identify underlying conditions that might put a child at risk during [physical activity](#).

Dr. Anastasi says sports screenings are not substitutes for health maintenance exams. He also recommends [young athletes](#) get a yearly sports physical.

"It's a great opportunity to really identify if something is normal or abnormal, and also to help that athlete succeed at the highest level of his or her ability," says Dr. Anastasi.

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