

Camp and Sport Physicals - Why Bother?

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Other than the fact that most camps, schools and team sport organizations require participants to undergo a physical prior to participation, why take the time and expense of completing a physical? Parents often question why a physical is necessary, especially if their children are fit and healthy. The answer is that the importance of the exam is commonly underestimated. Physicals assist parents and providers in

- prevention and detection of possible unknown conditions
- helping to determine the child's physical and mental readiness for the activity
- assist in the maintenance of overall good health



What to expect

Most physicals begin with a medical history – a series of general questions about past illnesses, injuries, any chronic health conditions. The provider will also ask if your child's immunizations are up-to-date. Be prepared to answer questions about the dates of any surgeries or injuries, whether or not your child has ever passed out, and experienced dizziness or shortness of breath. The physical part of the exam will include:

- measuring height and weight
- listening to the heart and lungs
- looking in the eyes, ears, nose, and throat
- taking blood pressure and pulse
- feeling the abdomen

The physician may also do some basic strength and flexibility testing, as well as examining the hands, knees, feet, back, arms, and legs.

For many children who are healthy, active and fit, a physical is their only visit to the doctor each year. Scheduling the physical with your child's regular physician is a good idea because he or she is familiar with your child's health history, and may be more able to detect subtle changes in your child's health. This is also an opportunity for both parents and children to ask questions about general health concerns, growth and development, injury prevention and/or rehabilitation, activity limitations, and any other concerns.

Check with your doctor's office to find out when your child's last physical was completed. Remember that your insurance company may not cover a physical more than once in a twelve month period. It is reassuring to know that your child is as healthy as you believe, and ready to participate in the activity he or she is excited about.



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