

Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Sudden Cardiac Death Risk Assessment

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) and sudden cardiac death (SCD) risk assessment is recommended for all youth at least once at C&TC visits beginning at age 11 years. Positive risk factors should prompt further evaluation.

C&TC standards

General

SCA and SCD risk assessment is recommended for all youth (regardless of athletic status) at least once at C&TC visits beginning at age 11 years. More frequent assessments may be appropriate depending on family and provider concerns.

Personnel

A licensed healthcare provider must review and interpret the risk assessment: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or a registered or public health nurse (RN or PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

Documentation

Document the results of the SCA and SCD risk assessment along with appropriate follow-up.

Refer to the documentation forms on the [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources](#) webpage for documentation examples or to

use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

Identify risk factors through a detailed and thorough personal history, family health history, and physical examination. Incorporate screening questions into the routine visit.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends asking the following four screening questions for SCA and SCD risk assessment (Erickson et al., 2021):

1. Have you ever fainted, passed out, or had an unexplained seizure suddenly and without warning, especially during exercise or in response to sudden loud noises such as doorbells, alarm clocks, and ringing telephones?
2. Have you ever had exercise-related chest pain or shortness of breath?
3. Has anyone in your immediate family (parents, grandparents, siblings) or other more distant relatives (aunts, uncles, cousins) died of heart problems or had an unexpected sudden death before age 50? This would include unexpected drownings, unexplained car accidents in which the relative was

driving, or sudden infant death syndrome.

4. Are you related to anyone with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) or hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, Marfan syndrome, arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ACM), long QT syndrome, short QT syndrome, Brugada syndrome, or catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia (CPVT), or anyone younger than 50 years with a pacemaker or implantable defibrillator?

Positive finding(s) from the SCA and SCD risk assessment should prompt further investigation that may include referral to a pediatric cardiologist or pediatric electrophysiologist (Erickson et al, 2021).

Importance of SCA and SCD risk assessment

SCA and SCD in the young leave lasting impacts on families and communities. The SCA and SCD risk assessment aims to identify high-risk youth for further testing to reduce SCD. Primary care providers are uniquely positioned to screen, evaluate, and manage the risk of SCA and SCD in the young (Erickson et al., 2021).

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Perform SCA and SCD risk assessment for children 11 years and older (regardless of athletic status) in the routine course of preventive health care (AAP, 2025). More frequent screenings may be appropriate

depending on family or health care provider concerns (Erickson et al., 2021).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Death in the Young](#)

Other resources

- [Project Adam](#)
- [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Death in the Young Case Registry](#)

Resources for parents

- [Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

New 06/2026

Resource links

- [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG\)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestRelease&dDocName=dhs16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestRelease&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
- [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Death in the Young \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/data/suddendeathinyoung.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/injury/data/suddendeathinyoung.html)
- [Project Adam \(https://www.projectadam.com/Adam\)](https://www.projectadam.com/Adam)
- [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Death in the Young Case Registry \(https://sdyregistry.org/\)](https://sdyregistry.org/)
- [Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation \(https://sads.org/\)](https://sads.org/)

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2025, February). *Recommendations for preventive pediatric health care*. Retrieved from https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf
- Erickson, C. C., Salerno, J. C., Berger, S., Campbell, R., Cannon, B., Christiansen, J., Moffatt, K., Pflaumer, A., Synder, C. S., Srinivasan, C., Valdes, S. O., Vetter, V. L., Zimmerman, F., & Section on Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, Pediatric and Congenital Electrophysiology Society (PACES) Task Force on Prevention of Sudden Death in the Young (2021). Sudden Death in the Young: Information for the Primary Care Provider. *Pediatrics* 148(1). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-052044>