



Frequently Asked Questions: For Parents Changes in Health Clearance for School-Aged Sports



What's happening to Sports Physicals?

Starting with the 2009-2010 school year, it is now recommended that Vermont students competing in middle or high school sports receive a “Well Exam” prior to playing school sports. The Well Exam replaces what is commonly known as a “Sports Physical.” This change is supported by the Vermont Principals' Association, the Vermont Departments of Health and Education, the Vermont Chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Family Physicians, and the Vermont State School Nurses' Association.

What's the difference between a “Well Exam” and a “sports physical”?

The Well Exam is a comprehensive exam that includes a thorough review of a student's medical history, a physical exam, developmental screenings, and age-appropriate wellness education. A “sports physical” does not meet the same level of care as a Well Exam. A “Well Exam” is a complete, research-based, specific type of exam developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Best practice standards for the sports component of the Well Exam were developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness.



Why are sports physicals no longer the standard used to play sports?

A sports physical generally offers minimal insight into an athlete's total health. The more comprehensive Well Exam addresses all aspects of a child's health - physical, social, and emotional. Well Exams allow health care providers the opportunity to not only ensure the student is fit to play, but also to identify, diagnose, and treat any medical problems that may otherwise be overlooked. Improved health outcomes, individualized education and prevention information, and consistent care by the child's medical provider, are all benefits of a Well Exam.

What forms will be needed?

Schools and families should use the, “Well Exam - Sports Participation Clearance Form.” It will be provided by your School Nurse or Athletic Department, your child's pediatrician, family doctor, or can be found at the Vermont Department of Health website: <http://healthvermont.gov/local/school/index.aspx>



What do we do with the form once it is filled out?

Like before, once a student has had a Well Exam, return the form to the school personnel required to receive it. There is no change in this process.

Which sports need a clearance form, and how often are the forms needed?

Check with your school for which sports require a clearance form. The school will determine how often an updated form is needed. Sports that required a form last year will require a clearance form this year.

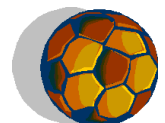


Recently my child had a Well Exam, but at the time did not need the new sports clearance form. Will my child need another exam?

Your provider will make this decision based on your child's individual circumstances, such as, how long it has been since the last Well Exam, and if there have been any changes in your child's health status. Call your child's provider as soon as you know he or she is planning to play a school sport.

Are Well Exam's covered by health insurance?

Many health insurance plans cover all or part of the cost of a Well Exam, but check your insurance policy first. If you need health insurance, or for information about Vermont's health care coverage programs, please contact Green Mountain Care at 1-800-250-8427, or online: <http://www.greenmountaincare.org/>



Plan ahead! Make an appointment as soon as you know your child is playing a sport.

It can take several weeks or months to get into a provider's office for a Well Exam. Don't wait until the last minute; your child might not be able to be seen for a Well Exam on short notice.