

## Athlete's Heart

“Athlete’s Heart” is a physiologic adaptation of the heart to vigorous physical training. It has not been shown to cause increased mortality, but this condition must be carefully distinguished from true heart disease. Often in attending physician statements, the term “athlete’s heart ” is used to describe many situations of heart enlargement - not all of which are truly benign athlete’s heart syndrome. One of the main distinguishing features is that the person must be a competitive level athlete who is undergoing vigorous physical training. The occasional jogger or “weekend warrior” should not have an enlarged heart and, if present, would point to the presence of heart disease. The sport that the athlete is involved in is also important. For example, competitive rowers have increased heart muscle mass but those who do track or weight lifting do not. Normally, the athlete is asymptomatic with no chest discomfort, fainting spells, shortness of breath, or irregular heart beats. Any of these symptoms, if present, would suggest other underlying heart disease. Slow heart rates (bradycardia), common in an athlete, and mild electrocardiogram abnormalities would not exclude the diagnosis of athlete’s heart syndrome. If there is a question of heart enlargement in a competitive level athlete, the echocardiogram is the best tool to help distinguish true heart disease from “athlete’s heart”. In athlete’s heart syndrome, normal findings would include:

- \_some enlargement of the left ventricle cavity (main pumping chamber of the heart) but should be < 64 mm (women) and < 66 mm (men)
- \_mild, uniform increase in heart muscle thickness but < 14 mm
- \_overall increase in left ventricular mass
- \_normal systolic and diastolic function of the left ventricle

**If your client has a history of enlarged heart, please answer the following:**

**1. Please list date of first diagnosis**

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**2. Have any of the following symptoms occurred?**

chest discomfort	yes	no
fainting spells or dizziness	yes	no
shortness of breath	yes	no
palpitations	yes	no

**3. Have any cardiac studies been completed? If yes please give details**

Exercise treadmill or thallium	yes	no
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Resting or exercise echocardiogram	yes	no
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**4. Is there a history of any heart disease (problems with valves, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, etc.)?**

If yes, please give details

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**5. Is your client on any medications?**

yes, please give details

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**6. Has your client smoked cigarettes or any other form of tobacco in the last 5 years? If yes, please give details**

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**7. Does your client have any other major health problems (ex: cancer, etc.)?**

If yes, please give details

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**Please submit the actual tracings and results of all completed cardiac studies.**