



Sports and Physical Activity

Guidelines for patients with congenital heart conditions to stay fit and healthy

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..in childhood

- you may have been told that exercise is dangerous
- the doctor may have told you not to do any sports at all
- your family or school may have not allowed you to do sports or physical activity.



...because

- you could die suddenly
- you could have major arrhythmia
- it could harm the heart
- you could bruise; if you are on a blood thinner



Is sport dangerous?

- Sudden cardiac death in young people during exercise is a very rare event
- The risk is not higher than in people without known CHD (some exceptions)
- It does not decrease the function of your heart



Is sport healthy?

- Regular physical activity has positive effects
 - Weight loss (less obesity!)
 - Lower blood pressure
 - Less diabetes, less hypercholesterinemia
- Physical activity makes you feel better



What should I do?

- Rule: regular and moderate activity (not maximum performance)
- Regular: 3 times / week for 1 hour
- Moderate: talking rule



How much can I do?

- How much you should do will depend on your heart condition and how your own heart can perform when you exercise
- Most patients can do more than what they believe
- But some have to accept limitations



How do the doctors decide restrictions?

- Based on the type of sport or activity
- How high it will make your heart rate go
- How your heart might respond to activity and sports



Best guide for getting active

- You are the best judge of what you can do
- If you can't talk and breath...slow down a little
- Sometimes a baseline exercise test is reasonable
- The doctor can guide your activity instructor based on your history



Do I have restrictions?

In most defects(>95%!) activity is limited by symptoms and common sense

The residual lesion is more important than the underlying defect itself



Do I have restrictions?

No Restrictions

Pulmonary Stenosis

Small Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD)

Small Atrial Septal Defect (ASD)

Repaired VSD or ASD

Repaired Tetralogy of Fallot
(without residual lesions)



Do I have restrictions?

No competitive activity (?)

after arterial switch operation
after Ross operation

Prosthetic valve with normal ventricle function



Do I have restrictions?

Avoid isometric exercise/ body impact

Marfan, Coarctation / PM, blood thinners

No Sports (?)

Severe narrowing in aortic valve

Severe Pulmonary Hypertension and
Eisenmengersyndrom



Summary

- Activity is good for your mind and body
- There is (almost) no reason why you should not do regular exercise training!

