

Exercise and Sports for People with a SADS Condition

Regular aerobic activity is essential to maintain health and prevent obesity and cardiovascular disease. Restricting athletes with SADS conditions from all competitive sports cannot only severely affect the physical health of the athlete, but also his or her psychological health.

The more we learn about SADS conditions, the more we realize that each patient is different from the next, and our advice must be tailored to the individual person.

Remember that these are general guidelines that are strongly influenced by whether the individual has ever fainted, whether they are taking medication and their family history. People who continue to faint despite treatment are a particularly high-risk group. When in doubt, discuss the specifics with your own doctor.

SADS' Mission

To save the lives and support the families of children & young adults who are genetically predisposed to sudden death due to heart rhythm abnormalities.

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When considering sports...

- **If the person is asymptomatic and taking beta blockers...** it is fine for her/him to participate in sports, PE classes, and other activities as their doctor allows.
- **All LQTS patients...**in general, should never swim alone.
- **ARVC/ARVD...** strenuous and competitive sports, or endurance or vigorous exercise are not recommended for people with ARVC because dangerous arrhythmias are more likely to occur. This type of exercise may also make your heart get worse over time.

“We demonstrate that after thorough evaluation, risk stratification, and tailoring of therapy, athletes and their families can participate in shared decision making and return to their competitive sports safely despite their LQTS diagnosis,” *Tobert, et. al, Return to Play for Athletes ...Genetic Heart Diseases Predisposing to Sudden Death, JACC, Vol. 78 No. 6, Aug. 10, 2021: 594-604.*

What can parents do?

- Make sure your child takes her/his medication as prescribed and at the same time each day. Make sure they drink plenty of water and that they are not taking any medications on the list of drugs to avoid.
- Let coaches, trainers and other sports officials know about your child's SADS condition and what needs to be done, including whether or not he/she has an ICD.
- Know which sports are safe. It may be possible to stay fully active in sports, including competitive sports, after carefully reviewing the risks and benefits with your doctor. In general, people with long QT syndrome should never swim alone.

- Sports are likely to be OK as long as you take a buddy along in case you have a fainting episode. Buddies need to be informed about LQTS and the potential dangers. They should be instructed to call for help, including 911, if a faint occurs. We highly recommend that buddies and all family members learn CPR.
- Make sure your family has an AED (automatic external defibrillator) and/or your child's school district has an AED program in their schools.

For more information, see the *Recommendations for Competitive Athletes With Cardiovascular Abnormalities* and other published articles on our website at [SADS.org/Living-with-SADS/Sports-Exercise](https://www.sads.org/Living-with-SADS/Sports-Exercise)