

Sickle Cell Trait Testing

In accordance with the recent NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) decision, all student-athletes must know their sickle cell trait or carrier status prior to participation in intercollegiate athletics. Beginning August 1, 2012, a student-athlete may not participate without a written waiver declining to be tested for sickle cell trait or carrier status. The waiver must be signed by the student-athlete and a parent/guardian. The waiver will be shared with the Athletic Department at Millersville University for the upcoming season.

The NCAA Bylaws (17.1.5.1) require that all student-athletes who are participating in their sport shall include a sickle cell trait test in their evaluation of student-athletes. The test results will be used to determine if a student-athlete is eligible to try out for a team or to sign a written waiver declining to be tested.

About Sickle Cell

Sickle cell trait is a genetic condition that will not change over time. Sickle cell trait is the inheritance of one gene for sickle cell hemoglobin and one gene for normal hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the iron-containing oxygen-transport protein in red blood cells. During extensive exertion, the sickle hemoglobin can change the shape of the red blood cells, causing them to become rigid and sticky. This change in shape can lead to a serious health risk for some student-athletes. During intense exercise, student-athletes with sickle cell trait have experienced stress, collapse, and even death.

Research has shown that sickle cell trait can lead to a blockage of blood vessels. This blockage can lead to the athlete's muscles being starved of blood, resulting in a rapid breakdown of muscles. Dehydration and asthma can increase the risk for the "sickling" of the red blood cells and worsen the symptoms, even when exercise is not intense.

Persons of any race and ancestry can have the sickle cell trait, but it is more common in some groups of people. All newborns in the United States are currently screened. You may be able to contact the state department of health in the state you were born to see if you can obtain your sickle cell test records.

FAQ's and Answers

Q: Why should I get tested for sickle cell trait? A: This blood test is provided for educational information and can be helpful in determining your sickle cell status for health care purposes. It is also helpful for the future of your status if you plan to have children.

Q: Is it mandatory that I have the sickle cell trait test? A: No, testing is not mandatory but the Intercollegiate Athletic and Health Services Departments at Millersville University strongly recommend that every student-athlete be tested for sickle cell trait. This testing can be obtained at the prior to the student-athlete arriving on campus. A copy of your test results

needs to be provided with your participation via physical services. If you do document that you can also be tested via physical services through an outside lab. If you do not have this lab.

Q: Can I decline to be tested? A: Yes, but you are aware of the risks associated with declining and have a liability waiver from any non-compliance with the mandatory testing.

Q: What if I test positive for sickle cell trait? A: The student-athlete will obtain a waiver from the health services director or certified nurse practitioner. The student-athlete will be informed of the possible medical effects on their performance and must also meet with their coach and a physician to be counseled and sign a waiver before participating in intercollegiate athletics.

Q: Who will keep my test results? A: The health services department at Penn State Harrisburg will keep your test results in a confidential file. However, your team coaches and medical staff will be notified of your sickle cell trait status so they can provide proper care and accommodations.

Summary: 3 options to obtain the necessary documentation for participation in athletics.

1) Preferred Method: Have your sickle cell trait test results sent to the health services department. Provide this documentation to your coach and sign a release if you were tested at birth. You will need to sign a release with the Department of Health Services. Your participation status as a student-athlete will be responsible for any expenses incurred by you for the test. The Department of Health Services will provide you with a copy of your test results and a waiver. 2) Provide your test results to the health services department. You will need to sign a release with the Department of Health Services. Your participation status as a student-athlete will be responsible for any expenses incurred by you for the test. The Department of Health Services will provide you with a copy of your test results and a waiver. 3) Provide your test results to the health services department. You will need to sign a release with the Department of Health Services. Your participation status as a student-athlete will be responsible for any expenses incurred by you for the test. The Department of Health Services will provide you with a copy of your test results and a waiver.

Please refer to the NCAA fact sheet for student-athletes at www.NCAA.org/health-safety. For more information, please contact the Department of Health Services at 717-837-3777 or 717-837-3778.

For more information, please contact the Department of Health Services at 717-837-3777 or 717-837-3778.