



### **What is an EKG?**

An EKG, or Electrocardiogram, is a non-invasive, completely painless test, which evaluates the health of your heart. It measures your heart rate and heart's electrical activity to tell the doctor if you have an irregular or dangerous heartbeat that can't be detected with a stethoscope.

### **What is the purpose for the test?**

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and in Illinois. Estimates of young adult deaths due to sudden cardiac causes vary from 300 to over 1000 annually in the United States. EKG testing helps identify heart conditions, including hypertrophic cardiomyopathy or HCM, and Long QT Syndrome, which affects young athletes. In the U.S., more than 20 million teenagers participate in athletics. By estimate, as many as 300 people will die from the silent heart condition HCM each year, of which the vast majority will be under 18.

### **How is the test done?**

You will lie down on a table and 10 adhesive pads (electrodes) will be placed on your arms, legs, and chest. A wire is then attached to each electrode connected to a special recording machine. During the EKG, electrical signals from your heart are sent from the electrodes to the EKG machine. The EKG machine records a reading of your heart rate and electrical activity on paper. This will only take about 2-3 minutes.

### **What should I wear?**

You should wear your gym uniform, if possible. If not, boys should wear a loose fitting shirt that can be easily removed for the screening. Girls should wear a loose fitting shirt with a bra underneath for the screening. Avoid wearing a dress, tights or leggings of any sort, as well as lotion.

**\*All students should avoid wearing multiple layers of clothing the day of the screening. Boys and girls will be tested in separate areas.**

### **Does it hurt?**

No, an EKG is painless. You may experience some discomfort removing the electrodes. Removing the electrodes is similar to removing a Band-Aid. If you have any allergy to adhesives (Band-Aids or tape), you may experience some redness and/or irritation where the electrodes were placed. **Please let us know if you have an allergy to adhesives.**

For more information, please visit [www.midwestheart.org](http://www.midwestheart.org)



*Midwest Heart Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the prevention and management of cardiovascular and related diseases through research, education and community leadership.*