

Guidelines help keep high school athletes alive

By Deborah Franklin, NPR

For all the benefits of exercise and teamwork to the heart and head, high school athletes still lead the nation in athletics-related deaths. And it doesn't have to be that way, sports medicine specialists say.

Many student deaths from head and neck injuries, heat stroke, sudden heart trouble and exertion-related sickle cell crises can be prevented, according to a scrum of leading sports doctors, athletic trainers, research physiologists and high school administrators who have endorsed a detailed set of guideline for keeping high school athletes safe.

"The idea was to create something that schools could almost use as a checklist," says Douglas Casa, who helped shape the consensus guidelines published in the August issue of the Journal of Athletic Training. Casa, who led a similar effort to produce conditioning guidelines for college athletes in 2012, is a sports physiologist at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, and chief operating officer of UConn's Korey Stringer Institute.

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