

The Road to a Cardiac Assessment

Why Should You Request a Cardiac Assessment?

- You fainted or had a seizure during physical activity
- You fainted or had a seizure associated with intense emotional, stressful, or startling events
- You have a family history of an unexpected or unexplained death associated with physical activity or emotional or stressful situations
- You have a family history of unexpected or unexplained deaths such as drownings, single motor vehicle accidents, or sudden infant death syndrome
- Your first degree family member (blood related mother, father, sister or brother) has received a diagnosis of a heart rhythm disorder which could be inherited
- Some (but not all) of these conditions are listed below:
 - o Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy (ARVC)
 - o Long QT Syndrome (LQTS)
 - o Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia (CPVT)
 - o Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM)
 - o Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)
 - o Brugada Syndrome

The list above is only a guideline to help determine who might be at risk for an inherited heart rhythm disorder. Sometimes these symptoms are missed or ignored and a death may occur in a family before the inherited condition can be diagnosed and treated. A referral to a physician with specialized training in the diagnosis and treatment of heart rhythm disorders is VERY important for prompt diagnosis and treatment that can prevent sudden cardiac death.

Where Do I Find a Specialist?

There are specialized inherited heart rhythm disorders clinics and physicians in most Canadian provinces. Please contact the Canadian SADS Foundation in order to discuss cardiac clinic options in your geographical area. It is important that you specify with your referring physician an appointment to one of these specialty centres.

The Referral Process

In order for you to obtain an appointment at a specialty centre, you will need a health care professional to make this referral. This person is likely to be a family physician, an emergency physician, or a nurse practitioner working in family practice.

The referral should include the following information:

- A brief patient history
- Relevant family history: events of sudden unexpected death or a diagnosis of an inherited cardiac arrhythmia in another family member
- Current medications and physical findings
- Copies of ECGs, Holter or imaging studies (if available)
- Copies of genetic testing results (if available)

The referring physician should also indicate the degree of urgency for this referral. More urgent circumstances are indicated if you have fainted or have had a seizure or experienced other concerning symptoms. The degree of urgency specified will ensure that the referral is reviewed in a timely manner.