

Sudden Cardiac Arrest A Coaches Fact Sheet

You Can Save A Life!



What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. It strikes people of all ages who may seem to be healthy, even children and teens. When SCA happens, the person collapses and doesn't respond or breathe normally. They may gasp or shake as if having a seizure. SCA leads to death in minutes if the person does not get help right away. Survival depends on people nearby calling 911, starting CPR and using an AED (if available) as soon as possible.

Recognize The Warning Signs

- ✓ Fainting/blackouts (especially during exercise)
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Unusual fatigue/weakness
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Nausea/vomiting
- ✓ Palpitations (heart is beating unusually fast or skipping beats)
- ✓ Family history of sudden cardiac arrest at age < 50

KNOW THE CHAIN OF SURVIVAL



1. **Recognize SCA:** If a person is unresponsive and not breathing normally, call 911.
2. **Call 911:** Call 911 to get help. Follow the emergency dispatcher's instructions.
3. **Start CPR:** Start CPR to triple the chance of survival. Push hard and fast in the center of the chest (100-120 pumps/minute).
4. **Use AED:** Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) to restart the heart. Follow the step-by-step audio/visual instructions.
5. **EMS response:** Transfer care to emergency medical services professionals, who will provide advanced life support.
6. **Hospital care:** Hospital professionals will continue integrated post-cardiac arrest care, including mild therapeutic hypothermia.

The main job of youth sports coaches is to keep athletes safe.
This Fact Sheet has information to help you protect athletes for Sudden Cardiac Arrest

While missing a game may be inconvenient, it would be a tragedy to lose a young athlete because warning signs were unrecognized, or because sports communities were not prepared to respond to a cardiac emergency!

Why Don't Youth Report Symptoms?

Studies show that signs typically occur prior to a cardiac arrest, but they are not recognized as life threatening. If you see something, **ASK THEM!**

Encourage athletes to be their own heart advocates and speak up if they are experiencing symptoms.

Youth Don't Report Symptoms Because:

- ✓ They don't want to be different
- ✓ They don't want to be left behind
- ✓ They Don't want to lose playing time
- ✓ They lived with it all their life, so they think it's normal
- ✓ They think it "will just go away"

--Nobody Asks Them--

How to Keep Athletes Safe

You can create a culture of prevention by acting on observed warning signs, by being prepared to respond to a cardiac emergency, and engaging bystanders in the role they can play in saving a sudden cardiac arrest victim.

- Enforce State law and remove from play athletes who faints, passes out, or have suspected cardiac-related symptoms
- Document the incident to assist medical evaluation
- Notify parent/guardian of the incident
- Work with athlete's parents and qualified health care provider on continued participation
- Follow State law in educating coaches, athletes & parents/guardian on nature and risks of SCA in youth sports
- Have an AED available, (if possible), or have knowledge of the location of one

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is the
#1 Killer
Of Student Athletes

1 in 300

Youth has an
undetected heart condition
that puts them at risk

Fainting

Is the #1 symptom
of potential heart condition

Survival

DECREASES 10%
Each Minute Without
intervention

**Bystanders Must
TAKE ACTION!**