

Keep Their Heart in the Game

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information for Athletes & Parents/Guardians

What is sudden cardiac arrest? Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the victim to collapse. The malfunction is caused by a congenital or genetic defect in the heart's structure.

How common is SCA?

As the leading cause of death in the U.S., SCA is also the #1 killer of student athletes and the leading cause of death on school campuses.

**FAINTING
is the
#1 SYMPTOM
OF A HEART CONDITION**

Who is at risk for SCA?

SCA is more likely to occur during exercise or physical activity, putting student-athletes at greater risk. While a heart condition may have no warning signs, studies show that many young people do have symptoms but neglect to tell an adult. They may be embarrassed, don't want to jeopardize their playing time, mistakenly think they're out of shape, or they simply ignore the symptoms. Family heart history factors increase the risk of SCA.

Recognize the Signs & Risk Factors

Tell Your Coach and Consult Your Doctor if These Conditions are Present in Your Student-Athlete

Potential Indicators That SCA May Occur

- Fainting or seizure, especially during or right after exercise
- Fainting repeatedly or with excitement or startle
- Excessive shortness of breath during exercise
- Racing or fluttering heart palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- Repeated dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain or discomfort with exercise
- Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise

Factors That Increase the Risk of SCA

- Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before age 50
- Specific family history of Long QT Syndrome, Brugada Syndrome, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, or Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Dysplasia (ARVD)
- Family members with unexplained fainting, seizures, drowning or near drowning or car accidents
- Known structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired
- Use of drugs, such as cocaine, inhalants, "recreational" drugs, excessive energy drinks, diet pills or performance-enhancing supplements

What are we doing to help protect student athletes?

California passed the Eric Paredes Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act in 2016 to protect K-12 students participating in school sponsored athletic activities. SCA training is now included in coach certification and protocol that empowers coaches to remove an athlete who exhibits fainting or other conditions believed to be cardiac related. An athlete who has been removed from play after displaying signs or symptoms associated with SCA may not return until they have been evaluated and cleared by a licensed health care provider.

We urge everyone to discuss the warning signs and risk factors associated with Sudden Cardiac Arrest and to become familiar with the cardiac chain of survival. Publicize the location of your AEDs and review your cardiac emergency response plan with your team each season.

For more information about Sudden Cardiac Arrest visit

California Department
of Education
cde.ca.gov

Eric Paredes Save
A Life Foundation
epsavealife.org

California Interscholastic
Federation (CIF)
cifstate.org

NFHS Free 20-Minute
Coach/Parent Video
nfhslearn.com/courses/61032

Cardiac Chain of Survival

On average it takes EMS teams up to 12 minutes to arrive to a cardiac emergency. Every minute delayed in attending to a sudden cardiac arrest victim decreases the chance of survival by 10%. Be prepared to take action in the first minutes of collapse.

Recognition of Sudden Cardiac Arrest



Victim is collapsed, unresponsive and not breathing, even if gasping, gurgling, exhibiting breathing noises or seizure-like activity.

Call 9-1-1



Follow emergency dispatcher's instructions. Call any on-site Emergency Responders.

Hands-Only CPR



Begin CPR immediately. Hands-only CPR involves fast and continual two-inch chest compressions—about 100 per minute.

Defibrillation



Immediately retrieve and use an automated external defibrillator to restore the heart to its normal rhythm. Follow step-by-step audio instructions from the AED.

Advanced Care



Designate a bystander to direct EMS to the victim for quick transfer to the hospital.

