

# For Youth Sports Coaches & Officials



**A main job of school and community youth sports coaches and officials is to keep athletes safe. This fact sheet has information to help you protect athletes from Sudden Cardiac Arrest.**

## Why Don't Youth Report Symptoms?

Studies show that warning sign/s typically occur prior to a Sudden Cardiac Arrest—but they are not recognized as life threatening. Active youth should have bodies that shape up, not break down. If you see something, **ASK THEM!** Encourage youth to be their own heart health advocate and speak up if they're experiencing any symptoms.

### **YOUTH DON'T REPORT SYMPTOMS BECAUSE:**

- ▶ they don't want to be different
- ▶ they don't want to be left behind
- ▶ they think they are just out of shape and need to train harder
- ▶ they don't want to lose play time
- ▶ they've 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 to remove from play athletes who pass out or faint, or have suspected cardiac-related symptoms
- Document the incident to assist a medical evaluation
- Notify parent/guardian of the incident
- Require written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider for return to play
- Encourage youth to report any symptoms
- Follow state law to have administrators, coaches and sports officials take SCA Prevention Training
- Have an accessible AED onsite
- Review your cardiac emergency response plan pre-game and at team meetings

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 a potential heart condition

**SURVIVAL**  
**DECREASES 10%**  
Each minute without intervention

**BYSTANDERS MUST**  
**TAKE ACTION**

# 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, but their heart has stopped. SCA leads to death in minutes if the person does not get help right away. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is the **ONLY** way to restart a heart. CPR can be a bridge to life until the AED arrives.

## Recognize the Warning Signs

- ▶ 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

# Know the Cardiac Chain of Survival



## RECOGNIZE Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- Victim is collapsed, unresponsive and not breathing
- Don't be fooled by gasping, gurgling or seizure-like activity
- SCA may also be caused by a hard blow to the chest



## CALL 9-1-1

- 9-1-1 operators can talk bystanders through CPR
- If an AED is onsite, ask anyone to retrieve it immediately



## PUSH

- Start hands-only CPR immediately
- Push hard and fast in the center of the chest
- About 2" compressions, 100 beats/minute



## SHOCK

- Anyone can use the AED—bystanders included
- Follow the step-by-step audio instructions
- AED will only shock if needed—let the machine decide
- AED **WILL NOT HURT** THE PERSON, **ONLY HELP**

**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.**

**KeepTheirHeartInTheGame.org**

