



Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Student & Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Note: This document was developed to provide student-athletes and parents/guardians current and relevant information regarding sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). A new form is required to be read, signed, dated, and turned into the student-athlete's school annually, where it will be kept on file to comply with the **Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 163, Section 10-149f: SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs and, if left untreated, can quickly result in death. SCA does not just happen to adults; it also takes the lives of students. However, the causes of SCA in students and adults can be different. A student's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

How Common is Sudden Cardiac Arrest in the United States?

SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults in this country. It is also a leading cause of death for student-athletes. About 300,000 sudden cardiac arrests occur outside hospitals each year. According to an April 2014 study from PubMed, the current incidence of SCA is:

- 0.63 per every 100,000 students (6 in 1 million)
- 1.14 per every 100,000 student-athletes (10 in one million)
- 0.31 per every 100,000 student non-athletes (3 in one million)
- There is a significantly higher risk of SCA for boys than with girls

Leading causes of sudden death among high school and college athletes, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), are heat stroke, heart disease and traits associated with sickle cell anemia. The same study concludes that prevention of sudden death, is associated with more advanced cardiac screenings with attention to medical histories and birth records, improved emergency procedures, and good coaching and conditioning practices.

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What are the warning signs and symptoms of Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have **signs or symptoms, such as: fainting or seizures during exercise; unexplained shortness of breath; dizziness; extreme fatigue; chest pains; or racing heart.** These symptoms can be unclear in athletes, since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated. **SCA is a medical emergency.** If not treated immediately it can cause sudden cardiac death. With fast, appropriate medical care, survival is possible. **Administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) – or even just compressions to the chest – can improve the chances of survival until emergency personnel arrives.**

What are the risks of continuing activity after experiencing warning signs and symptoms?

There are serious risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops pumping efficiently, the brain and other vital organs are compromised. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA will die from it. Any student-athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA must be immediately removed from the athletic activity.

Removal From Play:

Any student-Athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA must be removed from athletic activity and referred to a licensed healthcare professional trained specifically in the treatment of cardiac care. The symptoms can happen before, during or after activity.

Return to Play:

Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated by a licensed medical provider. Following the evaluation, written clearance, signed by the licensed medical provider, must be given prior to the student athlete engaging in any athletic activity.

To Summarize:

- SCA is, by definition, sudden and unexpected.
- SCA can happen in individuals who appear healthy and have no known heart disease. Most people who have SCA die from it, usually within minutes.
- Rapid treatment of SCA with CPR and an AED can be lifesaving.
- Training in recognition of signs of cardiac arrest and SCA, and the availability of AEDs and personnel who possess the skills to use one, may save the life of someone experiencing SCA.

Sources/Resources: Simons Fund- <http://www.simonsfund.org/Pennsylvania>

Department of Health - <http://www.simonsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Parent-Handout-SCA.pdf>

Mayo Clinic- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sudden-cardiac-arrest/basics/definition/con20042982>

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) - <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/scda>

American Heart Association (AHA) - <http://www.heart.org>