

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

A Fact Sheet for Student Athletes

FACTS

Sudden cardiac arrest can occur even in athletes who are in peak shape. Approximately 500 deaths are attributed to sudden cardiac arrest in athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and in all age levels. The majority of cardiac arrests are due to congenital (inherited) heart defects. However, sudden cardiac arrest can also occur after a person experiences an illness which has caused an inflammation to the heart or after a direct blow to the chest. Once a cardiac arrest occurs, there is very little time to save the athlete, so identifying those at risk before the arrest occurs is a key factor in prevention.

WARNING SIGNS

There may not be any noticeable symptoms before a person experiences loss of consciousness and a full cardiac arrest (no pulse and no breathing).

Warning signs can include a complaint of:

- Chest Discomfort
- Unusual Shortness of Breath
- Racing or Irregular Heartbeat
- Fainting or Passing Out

EMERGENCY SIGNS – Call EMS (911)

If a person experiences any of the following signs, call EMS (911) immediately:

- *If an athlete collapses suddenly during competition*
- *If a blow to the chest from a ball, puck or another player precedes an athlete's complaints of any of the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest*
- *If an athlete does not look or feel right and you are just not sure*

How can I help prevent a sudden cardiac arrest?

Daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep are all important aspects of life-long health. Additionally, you can assist by:

- Knowing if you have a family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in a family member before the age of 50 or a sudden, unexplained death at an early age)
- Telling your health care provider during your pre-season physical about any unusual symptoms of chest discomfort, shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint, especially if you feel these symptoms with physical activity
- Taking only prescription drugs that are prescribed to you by your health care provider
- Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase your risk
- Being honest and reporting symptoms of chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint

What should I do if I think I am developing warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?

1. *Tell an adult – your parent or guardian, your coach, your athletic trainer or your school nurse*
2. *Get checked out by your health care provider*
3. *Take care of your heart*
4. *Remember that the most dangerous thing you can do is to do nothing*

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

A Fact Sheet for Parents

FACTS

Sudden cardiac arrest is a rare, but tragic event that claims the lives of approximately 500 athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and in all age levels. The majority of cardiac arrests are due to congenital (inherited) heart defects. However, sudden cardiac arrest can also occur after a person experiences an illness which has caused an inflammation to the heart or after a direct blow to the chest.

WARNING SIGNS

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Warning signs can include a complaint of:

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EMERGENCY SIGNS – Call EMS (911)

If a person experiences any of the following signs, call EMS (911) immediately:

- *If an athlete collapses suddenly during competition*
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- *If an athlete does not look or feel right and you are just not sure*

How can I help my child prevent a sudden cardiac arrest?

Daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep are all important aspects of life-long health. Additionally, parents can assist student athletes prevent a sudden cardiac arrest by:

- Ensuring your child knows about any family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in a family member before the age of 50 or a sudden, unexplained death at an early age)
- Ensuring your child has a thorough pre-season screening exam prior to participation in an organized athletic activity
- Asking if your school and the site of competition has an automatic defibrillator (AED) that is close by and properly maintained
- Learning CPR yourself
- Ensuring your child is not using any non-prescribed stimulants or performance enhancing drugs
- Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase risk
- Encouraging your child to be honest and report symptoms of chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint

What should I do if I think my child has warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?

1. *Tell your child's coach about any previous events or family history*
2. *Keep your child out of play*
3. *Seek medical attention right away*

HEADS*UP CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **PARENTS**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion:

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE	SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache or “pressure” in head • Nausea or vomiting • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or blurry vision • Sensitivity to light • Sensitivity to noise • Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion • Just “not feeling right” or “feeling down” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears dazed or stunned • Is confused about assignment or position • Forgets an instruction • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Loses consciousness (even briefly) • Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

How can you help your child prevent a concussion or other serious brain injury?

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
 - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

What should you do if you think your child has a concussion?

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY. A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.

KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY. Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a repeat concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

TELL YOUR CHILD’S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION. Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

If you think your teen has a concussion:
Don’t assess it yourself. Take him/her out of play. Seek the advice of a health care professional.

It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.



HEADS*UP

CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **ATHLETES**

Concussion facts:

- A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works.
- A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- If you think you have a concussion, you should not return to play on the day of the injury and not until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and they may not be noticeable for hours or days. Common symptoms include:

- Headache
- Confusion
- Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feeling irritable, more emotional, or "down"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bothered by light or noise
- Double or blurry vision
- Slowed reaction time
- Sleep problems
- Loss of consciousness

During recovery, exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

DON'T HIDE IT. REPORT IT. Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to practice or play with a concussion.

GET CHECKED OUT. Only a health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it's OK to return to play. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out and the team can perform at its best. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.

How can I help prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

If you think you have a concussion:

Don't hide it. Report it. Take time to recover.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

