

## ATHLETE/PARENT/GUARDIAN SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST WARNING SIGNS

### What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of young people, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in youth and adults can be different. A youth athlete'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 blood flow 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. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. About 2,000 people under 25 die of SCA each year. Sudden cardiac arrest is the #1 cause of death for student athletes and the leading cause of death on school campuses.

### Are there warning signs?

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may experience symptoms, such as:

- \*Fainting or seizures during exercise
- \*Unexplained shortness of breath
- \*Dizziness
- \*Extreme fatigue
- \*Chest pains
- \*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.

### What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

California AB 379, signed into law in 2019, is intended to keep youth athletes safe while practicing or playing.

- All athletes and their parent or guardians must read and sign this form. It must be returned to the league before participation in any athletic activity. A new form must be signed and returned each year.
- The immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:
  - \*Fainting or seizures during exercise
  - \*Unexplained shortness of breath
  - \*Dizziness
  - \*Extreme fatigue
  - \*Chest pains
  - \*Racing heart
- Establish a policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest.
- Before returning to practice or play in an athletic activity, the athlete must be evaluated by a California licensed health care provider. Clearance to full or graduated return to practice or play must be in writing.

### What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing symptoms of SCA?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing SCA symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

California AB 379, signed into law in 2019, is intended to keep youth athletes safe while practicing or playing.

- All athletes and their parent or guardians must read and sign this form. It must be returned to the league before participation in any athletic activity. A new form must be signed and returned each year.
- The immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:
  - \*Fainting or seizures during exercise
  - \*Unexplained shortness of breath
  - \*Dizziness
  - \*Extreme fatigue
  - \*Chest pains
  - \*Racing heart
- Establish a policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest.
- Before returning to practice or play in an athletic activity, the athlete must be evaluated by a California licensed health care provider. Clearance to full or graduated return to practice or play must be in writing.

I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of Sudden Cardiac Arrest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date