

2022-2023

# Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fact Sheet

## What is cardiac arrest?

Cardiac arrest is the sudden loss of heart function that results in an individual's loss of consciousness. Cardiac arrest is a true medical emergency and must be treated immediately to increase the likelihood of survival. Cardiac arrest can occur at any age and may appear suddenly, or after an individual experiences warning signs. It is not the same as a heart attack. Sudden cardiac arrest is the number one cause of exercise related death in youth athletes.

## Who is at risk for sudden cardiac arrest?

Risk Factors	Warning Signs That May Lead to Cardiac Arrest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Family history of heart disease, attack, or cardiac death</li><li>▪ Cardiac conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, smoking or high cholesterol</li><li>▪ Underlying or unknown cardiac condition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Unexplained fainting or near fainting</li><li>▪ Chest Pain or Tightness</li><li>▪ Heart racing (chest palpitations)</li><li>▪ Abnormal shortness of breath</li><li>▪ Lightheadedness</li></ul>

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association (n.d.). Fact Sheet: *Sudden Cardiac Arrest* [Fact sheet]. Microsoft Word - Fact Sheet SCA 2011.doc (associationdatabase.com)

## What Should you do if you think your child is at risk?

If you think your child may have risk factors, or has exhibited warning signs of cardiac arrest, you should -

- ✓ Remove your child from physical activity
- ✓ Schedule an appointment to see your primary care physician or family doctor
- ✓ Do not allow your child to participate in any physical exertion until cleared by a physician

## What is done in a sudden cardiac arrest emergency?

- ✓ Check the scene and for a response from patient
- ✓ Call 911
- ✓ Ask someone to get an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), if available
- ✓ Begin CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)

## How does the Sentara Sports Medicine team prepare for a sudden cardiac arrest emergency?

As with all emergencies, the Sentara Sports Medicine team works to prepare for sudden cardiac arrest:

- ✓ Each High School & Middle School (as applicable) has an *Emergency Action Plan* in place that is reviewed annually by coaches, medical personnel, and staff
- ✓ Each coach and athletic staff member must hold a First Aid, CPR, and AED certification from a nationally recognized organization
- ✓ Automated External Defibrillators are available within each of our schools
- ✓ Policies in place to encourage safe participation in various environmental hazards
- ✓ Preparticipation exams (physicals) are required annually for each student-athlete prior to participation in activity

While these prevention strategies are in place for everyone's safety, Sentara nor your child's school district cannot guarantee that a cardiac emergency will not occur. Furthermore, participating in athletics could increase your child's risk.

By signing this document, I have received the educational information above and that I have reviewed the risk factors and warning signs of cardiac arrest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name: Parent/Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature: Parent/Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name: Athlete**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature: Athlete**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*The code of Virginia requires all school divisions to provide educational material regarding cardiac arrest to student-athletes and their parent or guardian on an annual basis. This fact sheet is provided in accordance with § 22.1-271.8. Sudden cardiac arrest prevention in student-athletes.*

All information provided is in reference and accordance with the Korey Stringer Institute, Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association and American Heart Association.