



SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST AWARENESS SHEET

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

- An electrical malfunction (short-circuit) causes the bottom chambers of the heart (ventricles) to beat dangerously fast (ventricular tachycardia or fibrillation) and disrupts the pumping ability of the heart.
- Occurs suddenly and often without warning.
- The heart cannot pump blood to the brain, lungs and other organs of the body.
- The person loses consciousness (passes out) and has no pulse.
- Death occurs within minutes if not treated.

What causes Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

- Conditions present at birth (inherited and non-inherited heart abnormalities)
- A blow to the chest (Commotio Cordis)
- An infection/inflammation of the heart, usually caused by a virus. (Myocarditis)
- Recreational/Performance-Enhancing drug use.
- Other cardiac & medical conditions/Unknown causes. (Obesity/Idiopathic)

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

- Fainting/blackouts (especially during exercise)
- Dizziness
- Unusual fatigue/weakness
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea/vomiting
- Palpitations (heart is beating unusually fast or skipping beats)
- Family history of sudden cardiac arrest at age < 50

ANY of these symptoms/warning signs may necessitate further evaluation from your physician before returning to practice or a game.

What are ways to screen for Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

- The American Heart Association recommends a pre-participation history and physical including 12 important cardiac elements.
- **The DIAA *Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation - Medical History* form includes ALL 12 of these important cardiac elements and is mandatory annually. Please answer the heart history questions on the student health history section of the DIAA PPE carefully.**
- Additional screening using an electrocardiogram and/or an echocardiogram is readily available to all athletes, but is not mandatory.

Where can one find additional information?

- Contact your primary care physician
- American Heart Association (www.heart.org)
- August Heart (www.augustheart.org)
- Championship Hearts Foundation (www.champhearts.org)
- Cody Stephens Foundation (www.codystephensfoundation.org/)
- Parent Heart Watch (www.parentheartwatch.com)
- NFHS Learn Center - Sudden Cardiac Arrest Video (www.nfhslearn.com)

All parents and players must sign the signature portion of the PPE indicating they have read and understand the above.