



SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST CHECKLIST

What to Know About Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 300,000 SCA incidents occur outside of hospitals each year in the United States alone.
- SCA is NOT a heart attack – someone who suffers a heart attack can still be responsive and breathe, while someone experiencing SCA is unresponsive and their heart has stopped beating.

Prevention

- Review your state SCA prevention acts.- Get in touch with your government affairs chair if there aren't any yet.
- Review and practice your emergency action plan (EAP).
- Ensure facilities are equipped with an automated external defibrillator (AED) and staff is trained in CPR and AED use.
 - Check the batteries in the AED regularly.
 - An AED can cover about five football fields, but you should consider obstacles that reduce the effective area an AED can cover.
 - Clearly identify the location of all emergency equipment in all EAPs so everyone knows where the closest AED is.
- Consider common factors that put athletes at risk for SCA, such as family history, heart murmur or Marfan syndrome.
- Educate all coaching staff on SCA signs and symptoms.

In The Moment

- Recognize SCA.
- Activate EAP and start CPR.
- Remove restrictive clothing and apply AED.
 - Identify who's in command; a health care professional, such as an athletic trainer, should handle the situation.
 - Anticipate next steps in EAP and offer to help.- Stay calm.

Return To Play

- Patient should obtain written clearance from a qualified medical professional, such as a cardiologist, primary care physician and/or athletic trainer.
- Gradually increase activity, under the guidance of your health care provider.
- Continue to monitor athlete for any recurring signs or symptoms of SCA.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Chest, ear or neck pain	Center chest pain that comes and goes
Severe headache	Lightheadedness
Excessive breathlessness	Shortness of breath with or without discomfort
Vague discomfort	Pressure, squeezing, fullness
Dizziness, palpitations	Nausea, vomiting
Abnormal fatigue	Cold sweat
Indigestion, heartburn	Pain or discomfort in arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
Agonal breathing seizure	

SOURCES: CDC, Korey Stringer Institute, National Athletic Trainers' Association, Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation, University of Washington Medicine Center for Sports Cardiology Infographic handout provided by National Athletic Trainers' Association (Updated 2023)