

ORINDA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
2021-2022 SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST INFORMATION SHEET

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA is not a heart attack. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the victim to collapse. The malfunction is caused by a congenital or genetic defect in the heart's structure. It is fatal in 92 percent of cases if not properly treated within minutes.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS AND RISK FACTORS OF SCA?

SCA often has no warning signs. In fact, the first symptom could be death. Athletes (and often their parents) don't want to jeopardize their playing time, so they may avoid telling parents or coaches in hopes that the symptoms will "just go away" on their own. Or, they may think they're just out of shape and need to train harder. Student athletes need to recognize and seek help if any of the conditions listed below are present.

Potential indicators that SCA is about to happen:

- Racing heart, palpitations or irregular heartbeat
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fainting or seizure, especially during or right after exercise
- Fainting repeatedly or with excitement or startle
- Chest pain or discomfort with exercise
- Excessive, unexpected fatigue during or after exercise
- Excessive shortness of breath during exercise

Factors that increase the risk of SCA:

- Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before age 50
- Specific family history of Long QT Syndrome, Brugada Syndrome, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, or Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Dysplasia (ARVD)
- Family members with unexplained fainting, seizures, drowning or near drowning or car accidents • Known structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired
- Use of drugs, such as cocaine, inhalants, "recreational" drugs or excessive energy drinks

HOW CAN THE CONDITIONS OF SCA BE DETECTED?

Physical Exam and Medical History. Prior to participating in athletics, students are required to get a physical and complete a medical history. This form asks questions about family history and heart conditions. The physical exam should include listening to the heart.

Heart Screening. An electrocardiogram (ECG) is an effective diagnostic tool that detects irregularities. An abnormal ECG exam can lead to other tests like an echocardiogram, stress test, Holter monitor, and more.

IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS EXPERIENCED ANY SCA SYMPTOMS

If your child has experienced any SCA-related symptoms, it is crucial to get follow-up care as soon as possible with a primary care physician. If the athlete has any of the SCA risk factors, these should also be discussed with a doctor to determine if further testing is needed. Wait for the doctor's feedback before returning your child to play, and alert his/her coach, trainer and school nurse about any diagnosed conditions.

California Education Code 33479.5 and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Bylaw 503 require implementation of a sudden cardiac arrest protocol that helps ensure and protect the health of student athletes:

A student who passes out or faints while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, must be removed from participation at that time by the athletic director, coach, athletic trainer, or authorized person. A student who is removed from play after displaying signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest may not be permitted to return to participate in an athletic activity until the student is evaluated and cleared to return to participate in writing by a physician and surgeon.

For more information, visit: <http://cifstate.org/sports-medicine/sca/index> (CIF)

By submitting the form of acknowledgement, I declare that I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of SCA.