

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

www.howardcountymd.gov/suddencardiacarrest

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a potentially fatal condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. Student athletes' risk of SCA is nearly four times that of non-athletes due to increased demands on the heart during exercise. SCA is caused by several structural and electrical diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Most conditions responsible for SCA in children are inherited, which means the tendency to have these conditions is passed from parents to children through the genes. Other possible causes of SCA are a sudden blunt non-penetrating blow to the chest and the use of recreational or performance-enhancing drugs and/or energy drinks.

Warning Signs of SCA

- SCA strikes immediately.
- SCA should be suspected in any athlete who has collapsed and is unresponsive.
 - No response to tapping on shoulders
 - Does nothing when asked if he/she is OK
- No pulse

Emergency Response to SCA

- Act immediately; time is most critical to increase survival rates.
- Recognize SCA.
- Call 911 immediately and activate EMS.
- Administer CPR.
- Use Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).

Info from American Heart Association (www.heart.org), Parent Heart Watch (www.parentheartwatch.org) and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation (www.sca-aware.org).