

**SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST  
A FACT SHEET FOR  
STUDENT-ATHLETES, COACHES AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

**What is sudden cardiac arrest?** Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is the sudden onset of an abnormal and lethal heart rhythm causing the heart to stop beating and the individual to collapse. SCA is the leading cause of death in the U.S. afflicting over 300,000 individuals per year.

***SCA is also the leading cause of sudden death in young athletes during sports***

**What causes sudden cardiac arrest?** SCA in young athletes is usually caused by a structural or electrical disorder of the heart. Many of these conditions are inherited (genetic) and can develop as an adolescent or young adult. SCA is more likely to occur during exercise or physical activity placing student-athletes with undiagnosed heart conditions at greater risk. SCA also can occur from a direct blow to the chest by a firm projectile (ie. baseball, softball, lacrosse ball, or hockey puck) or by chest contact from another player (called “commotio cordis”). While a heart condition may have no warning signs, some young athletes may have symptoms but neglect to tell an adult. **Any medical condition or concern needs to be shared with a coach and the school nurse.** If any of the following symptoms are present, a cardiac evaluation by a physician is recommended:

- Passing out during exercise
- Chest pain with exercise
- Excessive shortness of breath with exercise
- Palpitations (heart racing for no reason)
- Unexplained seizures
- A family member with early onset heart disease or sudden death from a heart condition before the age of 40

**How to prevent and treat sudden cardiac arrest?**

Some heart conditions at risk for SCA can be detected by a thorough heart screening evaluation. Young athletes who suffer SCA are collapsed and unresponsive and may appear to have brief seizure-like activity or abnormal breathing (gaspings). SCA may be effectively treated by immediate recognition, prompt CPR, and quick access to a defibrillator (AED).

AEDs are safe, portable devices that read and analyze the heart rhythm and provide an electric shock (if necessary) to restore a normal heart rhythm.

The **Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation** believes participation in athletics improves physical fitness, coordination, self-discipline, and gives students valuable opportunities to learn important social and life skills. With this in mind, it is important that we do as much as possible to create and maintain an enjoyable and safe environment. As a parent/guardian or student you play a vital role in protecting participants and helping them get the best out of their sport experience(s). Player and parental education in this area is crucial which is the reason for the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness information being presented. If you have questions regarding any of the information provided please contact the athletic director at your school.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS INFORMATION PRESENTED ON SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST.**

Student Signature:

Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: