

# Athlete/Parent/Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet and Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review Form

## What is sudden cardiac arrest?

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 doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of students, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in students and adults can be different. A youth athlete's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. 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 heart to suddenly stop beating.

## How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States?

SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults in this country. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. About 2,000 patients under 25 die of SCA each year. It is the #1 cause of death for student athletes.

## Are there warning signs?

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms, such as:

- fainting or seizures during exercise;
- unexplained shortness of breath;
- dizziness;
- extreme fatigue;
- chest pains; or
- racing heart.

These symptoms can be unclear in athletes, since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

## What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

## Public Chapter 325 – the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act

The act is intended to keep youth athletes safe while practicing or playing. The requirements of the act are:

- All youth athletes and their parents or guardians must read and sign this form. It must be returned to the school before participation in any athletic activity. A new form must be signed and returned each school year.

*Adapted from PA Department of Health: Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet and Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review Form. 7/2013*

- The immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:
  - (i) Unexplained shortness of breath;
  - (ii) Chest pains;
  - (iii) Dizziness
  - (iv) Racing heart rate; or
  - (v) Extreme fatigue; and
- Establish as policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest
- Before returning to practice or play in an athletic activity, the athlete must be evaluated by a Tennessee licensed medical doctor or an osteopathic physician. Clearance to full or graduated return to practice or play must be in writing.

*I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of SCA.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student-Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Student-Athlete's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Parent/Guardian's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## CONCUSSION INFORMATION AND SIGNATURE FORM FOR YOUTH ATHLETES & PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normal works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a "ding" "getting your bell rung" or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

### **Did you Know?**

- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness
- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of concussion?**

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports on or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care provider\* says s/he symptom-free and it's ok to return to play.

### **SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF**

Appears dazed or stunned, is confused about assignment or position, forgets an instruction, is unsure of game, score or opponent, moves clumsily, answers questions slowly, loses consciousness, even briefly, shows mood, behavior or personality changes, can't recall events prior to hit or fall, can't recall events after hit or fall

### **SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETES**

Headache or pressure in head, nausea or vomiting, balance problems or dizziness, double or blurry vision, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to noise, feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy, concentration or memory problems, confusion, just not "feeling right" or "feeling down."

### **CONCUSSION DANGER SIGNS**

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention after a bump, bow or jolt to the head or body if s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

One pupil larger than the other, is drowsy or cannot be awakened, a headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse, weakness, numbness or decreased coordination, repeated vomiting or nausea, slurred speech, convulsions or seizures, cannot recognize people or places, becomes increasingly confused, restless or agitated, has unusual behavior, loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

### **WHY SHOULD AN ATHLETE REPORT HIS OR HER SYMPTOMS?**

If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete's brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brains. They can even be fatal.

### **Remember:**

Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR ATHLETE HAS A CONCUSSION?**

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, remove the athlete from play and seek medical attention. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care provider\* says s/he is symptom-free and it's ok to return to play. Rest is key to helping an athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration such as studying, working on the computer or laying video games may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional\*.

*\*Health care provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician or a clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training.*

## **Youth Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Statement**

Must be signed and returned to community youth athletic activity prior to participation in practice or play

**Athlete Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent/Legal Guardian Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

### **After reading the information sheet, I am aware of the following information:**

- A concussion is a brain injury which should be reported to my parents, my coach(es) or a medical professional if one is available.
- A concussion cannot be "seen." Some symptoms might be present right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after an injury.
- My child will need written permission from a health care provider to return to play or practice after a concussion.
- Most concussions take days or weeks to get better. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.
- After a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body an athlete should receive immediate medical attention if there are any danger signs such as loss of consciousness, repeated vomiting or a headache that gets worse.
- After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that my child is much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before the concussion symptoms go away.
- Sometime repeat concussion can cause serious and long-lasting problems and even death.
- I have read the concussion symptoms on the concussion information sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date