SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST (SCA) FACT SHEET
For Parents & Student-Athletes

WHAT IS SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. It strikes people of all ages who may seem to be healthy, even children and teens. When SCA happens, the person collapses and doesn't respond or breathe normally. They may gasp or shake as if having a seizure, but their heart has stopped. SCA leads to death in minutes if the person does not get help right away. Survival depends on people nearby calling 911, starting CPR, and using an automated external defibrillator (AED) as soon as possible.

HOW COMMON IS SCA IN YOUNG ATHLETES?

As a leading cause of death in the U.S., most people are surprised to learn that SCA is also the #1 killer of student-athletes and the leading cause of death on school campuses. Studies show that 1 in 300 youth has an undetected heart condition that puts them at risk.

WARNING SIGNS – NEVER IGNORE

Report any of the following symptoms immediately to a coach, parent, or medical professional. Do not hide symptoms or play through them.

✓ Fainting, seizure, or convulsions during physical activity	✓ Pain or discomfort in arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
✓ Fainting repeatedly or with excitement or startle	✓ Dizziness or lightheadedness during exertion
✓ Chest pain, tightness, or unusual pressure	✓ Feeling "not right" after physical activity
✓ Unexplained shortness of breath during activity	✓ Racing, fluttering, or irregular heartbeat
✓ Unusual or extreme fatigue with exercise	

RISK FACTORS – FAMILY HISTORY THAT MATTERS

Most heart conditions that cause SCA are inherited. Share any of the following with your health care provider and accurately complete your Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation form:

- ✓ Family history of known heart abnormalities or sudden death before age 50
- ✓ Specific family history of Long QT Syndrome, Brugada Syndrome, Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Dysplasia (ARVD), Wolff-Parkinson-White (WPW) Syndrome, Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia (CPVT), Marfan Syndrome
- ✓ Family members with known unexplained fainting, seizures, drowning or near-drowning, or car accidents
- ✓ Family members with a known structural heart abnormality, repaired or unrepaired
- ✓ Personal or family history of high blood pressure
- ✓ Use of cocaine, inhalants, "recreational" drugs, excessive energy drinks, diet pills or performance-enhancing supplements

WHAT CAUSES SCA?

SCA occurs because of a malfunction in the heart's electrical system or structure. The malfunction is caused by an abnormality the person is born with, and may have inherited, or a condition that develops as young hearts grow. A virus in the heart or a hard blow to the chest can also cause a malfunction that can lead to SCA.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

- ✓ Tell a coach, parent, or athletic trainer immediately if you have symptoms
- ✓ Do not hide symptoms or continue to practice/play
- ✓ When in doubt, speak up and sit out
- ✓ If a teammate collapses: get help, call 911, bring the AED

FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

- ✓ Report concerning symptoms or family history to the school
- ✓ Do not allow participation without medical follow-up if symptoms are present
- ✓ Know your school's AED location and Emergency Action Plan
- ✓ Know the cardiac chain of survival — you may need it on the sidelines

CARDIAC CHAIN OF SURVIVAL – ACT IMMEDIATELY

1	2	3	4
RECOGNIZE	**CALL 911**	**START CPR**	**USE AED**
Athlete unresponsive?	Activate EMS immediately	Hard & fast compressions, center of chest	As soon as available

REMOVAL & RETURN TO PLAY

Under Montana HB 869 (2025), a student-athlete who exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest may be removed from participation by a coach, athletic trainer, or official. The student-athlete may not return until evaluated and cleared in writing by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

MORE INFORMATION

American Heart Association: www.heart.org
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation: www.sca-aware.org
MHSA Sports Medicine: mhsa.org/resources/sports-medicine

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET
For Parents & Student-Athletes

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes and sometimes damaging brain cells. You cannot see a concussion. Even a mild bump or "getting your bell rung" can be serious. Signs and symptoms can appear immediately or may not show up for hours or days after the injury.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Signs Observed by Teammates, Parents and Coaches:

✓ Appears dazed or stunned, vacant facial expression	✓ Shows behavior or personality changes
✓ Moves clumsily or loses balance	✓ Confused about assignment or position or forgets plays
✓ Answers questions slowly	✓ Can't recall events before and/or after hit
✓ Loses consciousness (even briefly)	✓ Repeats questions or forgets instructions
✓ Seizures or convulsions	✓ Unsure of game, score or opponent
✓ Slurred speech	

Symptoms Reported by the Athlete:

✓ Headache or "pressure" in head	✓ Difficulty concentrating or remembering
✓ Nausea or vomiting	✓ Confusion
✓ Balance problems or dizziness	✓ Nervous, anxious, irritable, sad or more emotional
✓ Blurred, double or fuzzy vision	✓ Drowsiness or sleep disturbances
✓ Sensitivity to light or noise	✓ Numbness or tingling
✓ Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy	✓ Feeling mentally slowed down
✓ Not "feeling right"	✓ Fatigue or low energy

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF CONCUSSION SUSPECTED?

FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

- ✓ Tell coaches and parents if you think you have a concussion — never ignore a bump or blow to the head
- ✓ Get medical evaluation before returning to play
- ✓ Give yourself time to get better – playing with a concussion risks a second, more serious injury and can cause permanent brain damage or death
- ✓ Wear properly fitted protective equipment every time you play
- ✓ Tell a coach if a teammate might have a concussion

FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

- ✓ Seek medical attention right away – only a health care professional should diagnose a concussion
- ✓ Do not allow return to play without medical clearance by an appropriate healthcare professional
- ✓ Inform the coach
- ✓ Inform the coach of any other recent concussions

REMOVAL & RETURN TO PLAY

A student-athlete must never return to play on the same day of a suspected concussion. Return must follow a gradual, stepwise protocol supervised by a health care professional. Written clearance from a licensed healthcare professional is required before returning to athletic participation under Montana law and MHSA policy.

HOW TO PREVENT A CONCUSSION

- ✓ Follow the coach's safety instructions and the rules of the sport.
- ✓ Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- ✓ Wear properly fitted and well-maintained protective equipment for every practice and competition.
- ✓ Support a team culture where athletes feel comfortable reporting symptoms and injuries without fear of losing playing time.

MORE INFORMATION

CDC Heads Up: www.cdc.gov/heads-up
NFHS Concussion in Sports Course: www.nfhslearn.com
MHSA Sports Medicine: mhsa.org/resources/sports-medicine

IMPORTANT: Any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from play immediately. Do not return the athlete to play on the same day.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST & CONCUSSION STATEMENT
For Parents & Student-athletes

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (HB 869): Schools are required to provide information regarding sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs to youth athletes and parents/legal guardians. A student removed from participation because of symptoms or warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest may not return until evaluated and provided written clearance by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. **Concussion (Dylan Steigers' Protection of Youth Athletes Act):** Schools are required to distribute information sheets informing and educating student-athletes and their parents of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or head injury. A student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury shall be removed from play at the time of injury and may not return until receiving written clearance from a licensed healthcare professional.

Both the student-athlete AND parent or legal guardian must initial each row and sign on next page. Return this completed form to the school before athletic participation begins.

Student-Athlete Name _____ School _____ Sport / Season _____

After reading the information sheets, I am aware of the following:	Student-Athlete Initials	Parent/Guardian Initials
Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a life-threatening emergency that requires immediate action, including 911 activation and use of an AED when available.		
Warning signs that must be reported right away include collapse or fainting during or after exercise, chest pain with activity, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or seizure-like activity after collapse.		
Important family history, including early cardiac death or known inherited heart conditions, should be shared by parents/guardians and discussed with an appropriate medical professional.		
I will report any warning sign, symptom, or episode that may be heart-related to a parent/guardian, coach, athletic trainer, or another responsible adult.		N/A
I understand that immediate action (Call 911, start CPR, use AED) can save a life.		
I understand an athlete may be removed from play if warning signs or symptoms of SCA are present.		
I understand that a student removed from participation because of symptoms or warning signs of SCA may not return until evaluated and provided written clearance by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.		
A concussion can affect the ability to perform everyday activities such as the ability to think, balance, and perform in the classroom.		
A concussion cannot be "seen." Some symptoms might be present right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after an injury.		
I will report symptoms (my own or a teammate's) to a coach, parent, or athletic trainer immediately and will not hide or play through them.		N/A
I understand that a concussion is a serious brain injury requiring removal from play and medical evaluation and clearance before return to participation.		
I (or my child) will not return to play in a game or practice if a hit to the head or body causes any concussion-related symptoms.		
After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that athletes are much more likely to have another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or practice occurs before concussion symptoms go away. Repeat concussions can cause serious and long-lasting problems.		

■ Blue rows = Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) items ■ Red rows = Concussion items *N/A = Not applicable for that category*

SIGNATURES

STUDENT-ATHLETE

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Concussion information contained in this packet.

Print Name	Student-Athlete Signature	Date

PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Concussion information in this packet, and have reviewed it with my student-athlete.

Print Name	Parent / Legal Guardian Signature	Date