

# SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

## What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest 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 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 of the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to stop beating.

## How common is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

While studies differ in the actual rate of occurrence, the American Heart Association information indicates that there are approximately 300,000 SCA events outside hospitals each year in the United States. About 2000 patients under the age of 25 die of SCA each year. Studies now being performed in Texas and other states indicate the occurrence rate for high school age athletes may be greater than this figure.

## Are there warning signs?

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

Dizziness	Fatigue	Lightheadedness
Extreme tiredness	Shortness of breath	Nausea
Difficulty breathing	Vomiting	Racing or fluttering heartbeat
Chest Pains	Syncope (fainting)	

These symptoms can be confusing and unclear in athletes. Often people confuse these warning signs as physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

For this reason these symptoms are included on the Medical History form provided by TAPPS and required for each student prior to participation in athletic events each year. As parents and student athletes, your truthful answers to these simple questions will assist your medical practitioner when performing the annual physical examination.

## What are the risks of participation and playing with these symptoms?

Continued participation brings with it increased risk. This includes playing in practices and games. 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 minutes. Most people who experience a SCA die from the event.

While TAPPS does not mandate Cardiac Screening prior to participation, TAPPS and the TAPPS member schools recognize the importance of our students' health and highly recommend discussing screening options with your health care provider. Any student who shows signs of SCA should be removed by the parents from play. This includes all athletic activity, practices or contests. Before returning to play, the student should be examined and receive clearance by a licensed health care professional of the parents' choosing.

**I have reviewed the above material. I understand the symptoms and warning signs of SCA.  
Additional information is available on the Health and Safety page at [www.tapps.net](http://www.tapps.net).**

Parent Signature / Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature / Date: \_\_\_\_\_