



# How Parents Can Protect Young Hearts

Did you know that we lose thousands of youth each year to Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)? SCA is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. When this happens, oxygen-rich blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs, causing loss of consciousness or seizure-like activity in seconds.

SCA is **not** a heart attack. That's a plumbing problem—a blockage that stops blood flow to the heart—and typically a condition that happens over age 35. Young hearts that suddenly stop beating have an electrical or structural problem. Sometimes they're born with it or it develops as they grow. And lots of times it gets overlooked because comprehensive cardiovascular assessments are not a standard part of youth health care.



*Sudden Cardiac Death  
in youth is preventable!*  
**TAKE THE  
PREVENTION  
PROMISE**  
ParentHeartWatch.org

## How Common is SCA in Youth?

- 1 in 300 youth have an undetected heart condition
- #1 killer of student athletes
- Leading cause of death on school campuses
- Contributes to the #2 medical cause of death under age 25

## Warnings Signs of Potential Heart Condition

- Fainting or seizure during or after physical activity
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain
- Palpitations, racing or irregular heart beat
- Unusual shortness of breath
- Excessive fatigue/tiredness
- Family history of heart abnormalities
- Unexplained death of family member under the age of 50

## What Causes SCA?

- Structural abnormalities of the heart muscle
- Functional abnormalities of the heart's electrical system
- Inflammation of the heart muscle caused by an infection
- Blunt blow to the chest
- Recreational drugs
- Use of performance-enhancing supplements, diet pills and energy drinks

## How Can SCA Be Prevented?

- Know your family heart history
- Complete a cardiac risk assessment with your child
- Recognize warning signs and symptoms of a heart condition
- Prompt evaluation by an appropriate medical provider
- Get a cardiovascular assessment\* at least every two years
- Learn CPR
- Advocate for automated external defibrillators (AEDs) wherever youth congregate
- Champion SCA prevention at your school



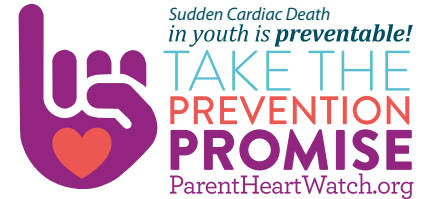
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Empowering parents, educators, nurses, coaches and athletic trainers in schools and school districts across the country to help us eliminate preventable deaths and disabilities from SCA in youth.

\*Includes diagnostic tests such as an electrocardiogram (EKG/ECG) echocardiogram or exercise stress test

# Preventing the Leading Cause of Death on School Campuses

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death on school campuses<sup>1</sup>—more than fires, violence, accidents, pre-existing health issues, head injuries, natural disasters or toxins. Many of these events have lessened by national attention or the enactment of prevention standards. Sadly, there is no national standard to prevent sudden cardiac death, even though 92% of victims die.<sup>2</sup>



We know that survival rates increase dramatically when cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are used within the first three minutes of collapse.<sup>3</sup> With the national EMS response rate averaging 8 to 12 minutes,<sup>4</sup> that means people at the scene are a bridge to life. But unless there's a written and well-practiced Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in place, chances are they won't be ready.

CPR and AED legislation varies by state, and no one is monitoring noncompliance. That's why it's critical for schools and school districts to champion prevention in their communities by implementing a CERP.

Created by a national task force of health and safety organizations including AHA, AASA, AAP, NASN, SHAPE America and Parent Heart Watch,<sup>5</sup> a CERP enhances a safe school environment for students, staff and visitors.

**If you could prevent a tragedy from happening at your school, wouldn't you?**  
Visit [parentheartwatch.org/cardiac-emergency-response-plan](http://parentheartwatch.org/cardiac-emergency-response-plan) to get started.

## What a CERP Can Do for Your School/District



**Raise SCA Awareness**  
*Helps educate students, parents, staff and coaches about the incidence of SCA in youth and how everyone can be prepared to save a life.*



**Implement Emergency Response Protocol**  
*Easily personalize CERP template and use implementation resources to share with your school community and facility renters.*



**Develop a Response-Ready Team**  
*A Cardiac Emergency Response Team will be CPR/AED trained. They help implement the plan and conduct drills.*



**Properly Install and Maintain AEDs**  
*Install to allow access within 3 minutes from collapse to shock—never lock away. Regular maintenance of battery and pads will ensure readiness when needed.*



**Conduct Life-Saving Drills**  
*Like fire drills, CERPs only work if you practice them. Drill templates help test your team's readiness and your plan's effectiveness.*

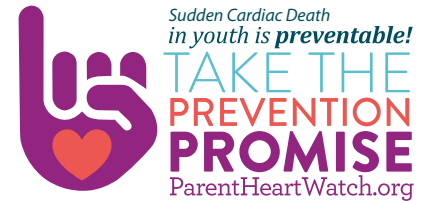


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<sup>1</sup><https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/outcomessuddencardiaccarrest.pdf>. <sup>2</sup>[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRandECC/What-is-CPR\\_UCM\\_001120\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRandECC/What-is-CPR_UCM_001120_SubHomePage.jsp). <sup>3</sup>JEMS. 2013;38(9):4 suppl. <sup>4</sup><http://elevaed.com/archives/2159>. <sup>5</sup><https://parentheartwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NASN-School-Nurse-2016-Rose-1942602X16655839.pdf>

# Protecting Students & Student Athletes from Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Did you know that one child suffers sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) nearly every hour each year?<sup>1</sup> In fact, studies show that 1 in 300 youth have an undetected heart condition that puts them at risk.<sup>2</sup> What's more, SCA is the #1 killer of student athletes.<sup>3</sup>



In spite of these statistics, cardiac risk assessments are not a standard part of well-child checkups or pre-participation physical exams, leaving parents/guardians unaware of potential warning signs and risk factors for a heart condition.

An American Board of Family Medicine study noted that 72% of youth

who had a sudden cardiac arrest were reported by their parents to have had at least one cardiovascular symptom before the event—they just didn't recognize it as life threatening.<sup>4</sup>

Families spend ample resources preparing kids to participate in activities they love, but they often overlook the

need to be sure their hearts are healthy enough to play.

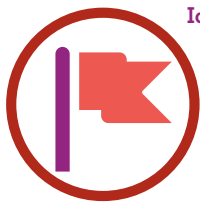
Coaches, physical education and health teachers can play a critical role in educating their school community and their students about how to monitor heart health.



**Recognize Warning Signs** *Fainting is the number one symptom of a potential heart condition. Others include chest pain or discomfort; dizziness or lightheadedness; racing heart, palpitations or irregular heartbeat (especially at rest); shortness of breath; unusual fatigue and unexplained seizure.*



**Encourage Kids to Speak Up** *Young people often don't tell adults if they experience symptoms. They may be frightened, embarrassed, unwilling to jeopardize playing time or simply unaware that what they are feeling indicates they may have a heart condition that puts them at risk for SCA or death.*



**Identify Red Flags** *While most kids experience these symptoms at some point, chronic or excessive occurrence is not typical. Especially if kids are on a regular exercise program, their body should be getting stronger, not breaking down, so consulting a doctor is recommended.*



**Give Kids the Facts** *Youth must understand they are at increased risk of sudden cardiac arrest if using performance enhancing or recreational drugs, high-caffeine supplements (energy drinks) or diet pills.*



**Understand Risk Factors** *Many heart conditions are inherited so it's important to review your family heart history. Tell a doctor if a family member had a heart abnormality (repaired or not); sudden death before age 50; unexplained fainting, seizures, near/drowning or unexplained car accidents.*



**Champion a CERP at Your School** *Cardiac Emergency Response Plans assure that your community is ready to prevent the leading cause of death on school campuses by being prepared to respond with a well-practiced plan that includes CPR/AED trained staff, properly maintained AEDs and EMS coordination.*



**Empower Kids to Engage** *When parents complete medical history questionnaires, they often do so absent of their child's input. Parents assume they'd know if something was wrong—that's not always true. Teach kids to take part in this assessment and consider the questions thoughtfully.*



**Use Our Free Educational Resources** *In our toolkit you'll find free posters, flyers, fact sheets, graphics, research papers, a cardiac risk assessment, CPR and AED tools, cardiac chain of survival training, videos and more. Visit [parentheartwatch.org/take-promise](http://parentheartwatch.org/take-promise)*

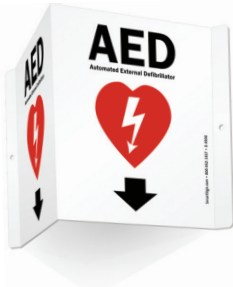


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<sup>1</sup>2015 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Circulation. 2014;CIR.0000000000000152. <sup>2</sup><https://parentheartwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/1in300YouthAtRisk-Research.png>.

<sup>3</sup>Journal of Athletic Training 2017;52(4):000-000 Harmon et al DOI: 10.1161/CirculatoInAHA.115.015431. <sup>4</sup>J Am Board Fam Med. 2012;25(4):408-415

# Protect Your Child's Heart



Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is caused by a structural or electrical abnormality in the heart causing a fatal arrhythmia that suddenly and unexpectedly stops the heart from beating. While CPR can be a bridge to life, the only way to restart the heart is with an automated external defibrillator (AED).



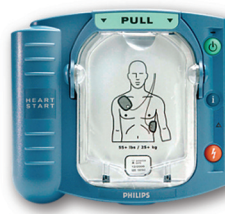
Cardiac Science



Defibtech



HeartSine



Philips



Physio-Control



Zoll

Emergency medical responders are equipped with AEDs, but given every minute's delay in defibrillation decreases the chance of survival by 10%, having an onsite AED at the ready in three minutes or less is critical.

While SCA is the #1 killer of student athletes and the leading cause of death on school campuses, sadly, we don't yet have a national standard requiring AEDs anywhere youth congregate and state requirements vary greatly. That's why parents, educators, coaches and all youth advocates must come together to make their facility and playing fields safe.

## AED and The Law

If your child has been diagnosed by a physician to have a heart condition, s/he is entitled to have access to an AED on school grounds or field trips as part of a 504 Plan or Individual Action Plan (IEP). Check out our [Prevention Promise Toolkit](#) for more information, or learn more at the [Department of Education](#). If your doctor has written an Rx for an AED but your insurance is denying coverage, visit [LifeSure](#) for assistance.

## Maintain Your AED

Registering your AED with Atrus National AED Registry will serve as a reminder to be prepared to save a life:

- AED inspection
- Battery and pads expiration date alerts
- Manufacturer recall alerts



Sudden Cardiac Death in youth is **preventable!**  
**TAKE THE PREVENTION PROMISE**  
[ParentHeartWatch.org](#)

## Be Prepared to Respond to a Cardiac Emergency

Visit [ParentHeartWatch.org](#) for a free toolkit to implement a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) at your school.

Get CPR/AED training from a community resource, your local fire department or visit these national organizations to find training in your area:

- American Heart Association
- Emergency Care and Safety Institute
- American Red Cross
- National Safety Council

## How Can You Get an AED?

Use the resources at [parentheartwatch.org/getaed](#) to make a presentation or apply for funding.

### School Support

- PTA, Student or Booster Club Fundraiser
- School Board Initiative

### Civic Groups

- Rotary • Kiwanis
- Lions • Jr. Service League
- Women's Club

### Crowdfunding

- Got AED
- ThinkAED

### Grants

- AED Superstore
- AEDGrant.com
- Your Community Foundations

### Parent Heart Watch & Member Programs

- Get Charged Up!
- Local PHW Foundations



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# Back-to-School Protection From the Leading Cause of Death on Campus

What parents can do protect young hearts from sudden cardiac arrest as they head back to school

PRESS RELEASE UPDATED: JUL 20, 2017

Wilmington, DE, July 20, 2017 (Newswire.com) - Did you know that one child suffers sudden cardiac arrest nearly every hour each year? In fact, studies show that 1 in 300 youth have an undetected heart condition that puts them at risk. Even so, cardiac risk assessments and heart screenings are not a standard part of well-child checkups or pre-participation physical examinations – even though the first symptom of sudden cardiac arrest is often death for thousands of kids.

As families prepare for Back to School, Parent Heart Watch urges parents to *Take the Prevention Promise* to protect their kids from sudden cardiac arrest—the leading cause of death on school campuses.

An American Board of Family Medicine study noted that 72% of youth who had a sudden cardiac arrest were reported by their parents to have had at least one cardiovascular symptom before the event—they just didn't recognize it as life threatening. Parents are their children's best advocates so it's important to educate yourself and other adults who engage with your children about potential [warning signs and symptoms](#):

“Sudden cardiac arrest is the #1 killer of student athletes and contributes to the #2 medical cause of death under age 25. As parents we spend time and money preparing kids to participate in the activities they love, but we often overlook being sure their hearts are healthy enough to play.”

— MARTHA LOPEZ-ANDERSON, PARENT HEART WATCH  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- fainting
- chest pain or discomfort
- racing heart, palpitations or irregular beat
- shortness of breath
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- unusual fatigue

While some schools and sports teams require parents to complete a medical history form, it's often done without even consulting the child. Parents assume that if their child hasn't mentioned any issues, they're fine. But if a child has lived with these symptoms all their life, they may not



recognize it as unusual. Sometimes they don't want to admit they can't keep up with their team. Or, they (or their parents) do not want to jeopardize their playing time.

Still, heart conditions may not present with symptoms. And most of these conditions cannot be heard with a stethoscope. That's why it's important to ask your doctor about getting an electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG). It's a quick, painless, non-invasive test that evaluates atypical heart rhythms caused by electrical or structural abnormalities that a child is born with or can develop as they grow.

What can parents do to properly evaluate their child's heart health?

1. Evaluate your family heart history, especially if someone died under the age of 50 from a heart condition or unexplained death, as many heart conditions are hereditary
2. Complete a [cardiac risk assessment](#) with your child
3. Discuss the cardiac risk assessment at each doctor's appointment
4. Ask your doctor about getting an EKG heart screening for your child
5. Visit Parent Heart Watch for [a list of free or low-cost youth heart screenings](#) in your area
6. Seek feedback from coaches, counselors or caregivers about any symptoms
7. [Request free posters and flyers](#) from Parent Heart Watch for your community

Take the Prevention Promise now and get free sudden cardiac arrest prevention resources in our *5 to Stay Alive* Toolkit at [www.parentheartwatch.org](http://www.parentheartwatch.org).

*Parent Heart Watch is the national voice solely dedicated to protecting youth from sudden cardiac arrest and preventable sudden cardiac death. Parent Heart Watch leads and empowers others by sharing information, educating and advocating for change. Our vision is to eliminate preventable deaths and disabilities from sudden cardiac in youth by 2030.*



# Go Back to a Heart Safe School

Is your school prepared to save your child from the #1 cause of death on school campuses?

PRESS RELEASE UPDATED: AUG 3, 2017

Wilmington, DE, August 3, 2017 (NewsWire.com) - Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death on school campuses. Thousands of youth are lost each year when kids suddenly and unexpectedly collapse, typically from an undetected heart condition, sometimes from a blunt blow to the chest. Given 92% of victims die, emergency aid is required in three minutes or less. When the national response time for EMS averages 8 to 12 minutes, how can that life be saved?



Parent Heart Watch urges schools to implement a [written and well-practiced cardiac emergency response plan \(CERP\)](#) that details how to prepare a CPR-trained team to respond quickly, and why automated external defibrillators (AED) are a critical life-saving tool that is the only way to restart the heart of an SCA victim. AEDs are specifically designed for anyone to use. Every minute delayed decreases a victim's chance of survival by 10%.

Parent Heart Watch was part of a national task force of health and education organizations that created the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan Toolkit.

*“Fire drills and fire extinguishers are standard school safety practices, so it's not hard to imagine the impact CPR, AEDs and CERPs would make in school communities. The Institute of Medicine reported that the best way to increase the survival rate for sudden cardiac arrest victims is to engage bystanders in emergency action.”*

— MARTHA LOPEZ-ANDERSON, PARENT HEART WATCH  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What can a CERP do for your school?

- Educate parents, teachers, and coaches about sudden cardiac arrest in youth
- Form a cardiac emergency response team that is CPR trained
- Establish a response plan that's personalized to your school
- Inform on how AEDs should be installed and properly maintained
- Conduct life-saving drills to assure your readiness

Parents, PTAs, boosters, school nurses, PE and health teachers and other school groups can champion making a school heart safe by introducing CERPs to your principal and volunteering to be on the CER team.

To find about more about making your school heart safe, and to get free educational posters and flyers plus new videos to share with your community, visit [www.parentheartwatch.org](http://www.parentheartwatch.org).

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# MISSION ❤️ POSSIBLE 5 Steps To Save A Life



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