



# 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



**Parent Heart Watch.**  
THE NATIONAL VOICE  
PROTECTING YOUTH FROM SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

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