

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Occurs suddenly and often without warning.

An electrical malfunction (short-circuit) causes the bottom chambers of the heart (ventricles) to beat dangerously fast (ventricular tachycardia or fibrillation) and disrupts the pumping ability of the heart.

The heart cannot pump blood to the brain, lungs and other organs of the body.

The person loses consciousness (passes out) and has no pulse.

Death occurs within minutes if not treated immediately.

What Causes Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

(passed on from family)

– hypertrophy (thickening) of the left ventricle; the most common cause of sudden cardiac arrest in athletes in the U.S.

– replacement of part of the right ventricle by fat and scar; the most common cause of sudden cardiac arrest in Italy.

– a disorder of the structure of blood vessels that makes them prone to rupture; often associated with very long arms and unusually flexible joints.

The Effects on Sudden Cardiac Arrest

American Heart Association:
www.heart.org

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What are the current recommendations for screening young athletes?

The University Interscholastic League requires use of the specific Preparticipation Medical History form on a yearly basis. This process begins with the parents and student-athletes answering questions about symptoms during exercise (such as chest pain, dizziness, fainting, palpitations or shortness of breath).