

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for Schools



Project S.A.V.E

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) should be in place for all schools since sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at anytime. The threat is highest for adults, but children of any age, not just student athletes, are at risk, too. It is also vital to have a plan when there is a student with a known cardiac condition. This puts him at an increased risk for sudden cardiac arrest.

1. In schools, staff may witness a SCA (sudden cardiac arrest). Therefore, it is crucial they know how to recognize the event, call 911 and start CPR immediately.

Sudden witnessed unresponsiveness, or finding someone unresponsive, is the first sign for all staff to recognize. With an event, a person may not have purposeful breathing or chest movement. Treat the person as if he has a SCA until proven otherwise. Call 911, start CPR and use an AED.

It is also important to know that:

- If the victim is not breathing normally (or just gasping), start CPR immediately.
 - **No** pulse check is needed.
 - The victim may have some jerking movements that look like a seizure.
 - A blow to the chest can cause sudden cardiac arrest.
 - If there is any doubt, it is best to start CPR--you will not hurt the victim.
2. When you recognize these signs:
 - Start CPR. Compressions should be:
 - Hard and fast
 - To the middle of the chest (on the lower half of the breastbone)
 - 2 inches deep
 - At a rate of at least 100 compressions per minute (to the beat of the song, "Stayin' Alive")
 - If others are present, send someone to call 911 and someone else to get the school's AED (if there is one).
 - Send another person to the front of the school to direct EMS (Emergency Medical Services) when they arrive.
 - If no one else is around, call 911 before starting compressions.
 3. For an adult or teen victim:
 - Turn on the AED.
 - Follow the prompts, and apply the pads right away.

For an elementary-age child:

- Give CPR for 2 minutes.
- Then, turn on the AED, and apply the pads.

You cannot hurt the victim with CPR or the AED. It will not shock someone who does not need to be shocked, so do not hesitate to use the AED.

- Continue to follow the AED prompts.
- Provide CPR after each shock, if prompted.
- Switch rescuers every 2 minutes until EMS arrives.

Effective CPR buys you time. It produces circulation and protects heart and brain cells until the AED can be used to jumpstart the heart's natural beat.

4. In most schools, the plan should be for a witness to call the front office as soon as possible, and front office staff will:

- Call the designated first responder team using the overhead paging system and/or a walkie talkie or cell phone
Call 911
- Send the AED
- Send someone to the front to direct EMS when they arrive

CPR should be started as soon as possible, preferably within 1 minute. The victim's survival decreases by 10% with each minute of delay.

5. Other important parts of a comprehensive emergency plan are:

- There should be at least 5 staff members with current training in CPR and AED use, including some who are present during after-school hours and for sports.
- There should be someone responsible for checking the AED at least once a month for routine maintenance. There should also be a budget for replacing pads (usually every 2 years) and batteries (usually every 4 years) as per manufacturer's guidelines.
- The AED, like fire extinguishers, should be accessible to everyone at all times. Never keep it in a locked box or behind a locked door when people might be in the building.
- There should also be a plan in place for medical emergencies during after-school activities, sports practices and games, band practice, concerts and other school events.
- There should be a lifelike practice drill, which includes first responders, an AED trainer and a manikin, at least once a year.
- The school nurse, if present, should lead and direct the response team--making sure that all efforts are coordinated and completed, that compressions are effective and that other parts of the plan are efficiently performed.

- If no AED is present or available in the school, first responders must provide continuous, effective CPR and change rescuers every 2 minutes. This is critical to keeping the victim's heart and brain protected until EMS arrives.

When this plan is in place and has been practiced, it can be used as a template for any other medical emergency.

Any school can contact the Clinical Manager of Project S.A.V.E. at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at 404-785-7201 for more information and assistance with practice drills, training, review of emergency plans, etc.

Another user-friendly website with great information and templates about sports emergency action plans can be found at: www.anyonecansavealife.org.