

Week 3**HEART HEALTH*****Recognizing Sudden Cardiac Arrest
and Saving Lives*****WHY SHOULD I CARE?**

Most people think heart problems only affect older adults... but every year, young athletes and students experience sudden cardiac arrest, often without knowing they have an underlying heart condition. Knowing the warning signs, understanding your family health history, and learning how to respond in an emergency could help save a life. You don't have to be a doctor to make a difference. Sometimes being prepared, speaking up, or knowing CPR is enough to give someone a second chance.

**BIG IDEAS****HEART EMERGENCIES CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE**

Sudden cardiac arrest isn't just an adult health issue. While it's uncommon, it can affect young people—including student athletes—often because of an undiagnosed heart condition. Recognizing the warning signs can help save lives.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Understanding your family history and paying attention to symptoms like unexplained fainting (syncope), chest pain, or irregular heart rhythms can help identify potential heart problems before an emergency occurs.

EVERY SECOND COUNTS

When someone experiences sudden cardiac arrest, acting quickly is critical. Calling 911, starting CPR, and using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are all part of the Cardiac Chain of Survival and can greatly improve the chance of survival.

YOU CAN HELP SAVE A LIFE

You don't have to be a healthcare professional to make a difference. Learning CPR, knowing where an AED is located, and feeling confident enough to act can help someone survive a cardiac emergency.

**KEY VOCABULARY**

Arrhythmia: An abnormal heart rhythm that can interfere with the heart's ability to pump blood effectively.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED): A portable device that analyzes the heart's rhythm and can deliver an electric shock to help restore a normal heartbeat.

Cardiac Chain of Survival: A series of emergency actions—including calling 911, performing CPR, using an AED, and providing advanced medical care—that improves survival after sudden cardiac arrest.

Cardiac Screening: A medical evaluation used to identify heart conditions that increase the risk of sudden cardiac arrest.

Defibrillation: The use of an electric shock to restore a normal heart rhythm during certain cardiac emergencies.

Family History: Health conditions that have affected close relatives and increase the risk of inherited diseases.

Heart Attack: A medical emergency that occurs when blood flow to part of the heart is blocked, damaging heart muscle.

Heart Rhythm: The regular pattern of heartbeats that allows the heart to pump blood effectively.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA): A life-threatening emergency in which the heart suddenly stops beating effectively, causing the person to collapse and lose consciousness.

Syncope: A temporary loss of consciousness, or fainting, caused by a sudden decrease in blood flow to the brain.



Learn it. Live it.

Knowing how to respond during a cardiac emergency can save a life. This challenge will help you identify heart health resources in your community and introduce you to a free program where you can learn more.

Challenge: Find the nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at your school, workplace, or another place you visit regularly. Then explore the Smart Hearts program in this week's *Want to Know More?* section.

Reflection: Now that you know where to find an AED, would you feel confident using it? What would make you feel more confident?

DID YOU KNOW?

Just over 70% of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen in the home, so the life you may save could be a family member or a friend.

Source: American Red Cross



EXPLORE AND EXPLAIN

- Why is it important to recognize the warning signs of a heart emergency and respond quickly?
- What is the difference between a heart attack and sudden cardiac arrest, and why does that difference matter?
- How can CPR and an AED work together to improve a person's chances of survival during sudden cardiac arrest?
- How can learning about heart health today help you protect yourself, your family, or someone in your community?



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

WEBSITE



[Smart Hearts: Get Smart About Saving Hearts](#)

Explore the free Smart Hearts program and learn how CPR, AEDs, and other skills can help you respond during a cardiac emergency.

VIDEO



[The Greatest Assist of His Life](#)

Watch Steve Hartman tell the incredible story of a basketball player who jumped into action when a referee collapsed and helped save his life.

ARTICLE



[Why the First Few Minutes Matter](#)

Most cardiac arrests outside hospitals happen at home. Find out why the first few minutes could make the difference for someone you love.

"Heart conditions don't just affect older adults. Sometimes the warning signs appear in young, healthy people—and recognizing them can save a life."