



How to prepare, What to do if **COMMOTIO CORDIS STRIKES**

Sudden Death from Commotio Cordis:

#2 KILLER IN SPORTS

TIPS:

What to do on a precautionary level and, if you see what *could* be a commotio cordis event, basic actions to take:

- **Prior:** Know whether there is an athletic trainer present at a sports event. Is there an AED there or not, where is it, is it operable, etc.
- **What to look for:** An athlete (usually between ages of 10 to 18, is hit in the chest by an object such as a baseball, baseball bat, lacrosse ball, hockey puck, soccer ball, fist (in karate), etc. The athlete will typically stumble forward for a few seconds, which is followed by unconsciousness, no breathing, and no pulse. Many observers mistake the moment as being *“Oh, he just got the wind knocked out of him.”* Even if there is no understanding of exactly what has happened and there is no apparent trauma, assume it could be deadly commotio cordis.
- **Emergency Action Plan:** Observers must quickly take action by checking breathing and pulse, activating the EMS system (call 911), send for the AED and initiate CPR if necessary. As soon as the AED arrives, apply the electrodes to assist in monitoring the athlete.
- **Early CPR immediately after the emergency response system has been activated is important.** That combined with rapid defibrillation can significantly increase the chances of survival. For every 1-minute delay in getting shocked by the AED there is a generally 10% decline in survival rate.
- **Performing CPR while the AED or defibrillator is readied for use is strongly recommended.**
- **Using an AED is the best practice** and gives the athlete the greatest chance of survival.



DISCLAIMER: These suggested actions to deal with commotio cordis are offered as general information only. Consult your local physician expert(s) for detailed information, actions and mitigation efforts that can be taken in the identification and treatment of commotio cordis on the field. No matter what happens on the field, whenever an athlete goes down for any length of time and is unresponsive, call 911 immediately and seek expert help immediately.