Weill Cornell Medicine Surviving Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when your heart stops beating. When this happens, blood no longer flows to your brain and other organs. A quick response is vital.

Know the Risks

Anyone can experience SCA, but your risk increases based on the following:

- Health history.

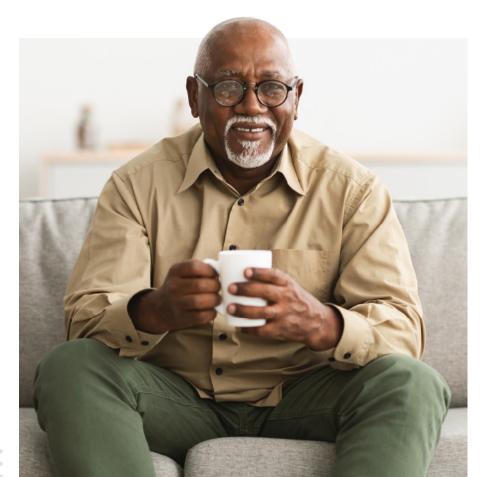
A previous heart attack or current cardiovascular disease makes you more likely to face SCA.

- Lifestyle choices.

Abusing drugs or alcohol makes SCA more likely in the future.

- Sex, ethnicity and age.

Your risk increases as you age and if you are male or Black.





Identify the Symptoms

While the first sign of a sudden cardiac arrest event is usually loss of consciousness and responsiveness, other symptoms that can occur before fainting include:

- Abnormal breathing, such as gasping for air
- Chest pain
- Lightheadedness or dizziness

- Nausea or vomiting

Seek Emergency Care

Anytime you suspect SCA, call 911. **If possible, begin treatment.**



Start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Performing immediate CPR helps prevent permanent damage.

Step 2:

Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) when available. Shocking the heart back into rhythm helps restore blood flow to the brain and other body parts.



Continue CPR. CPR should continue until EMS arrives and takes over care, unless the affected person starts to breathe or move.

Visit weillcornell.org/doctors to find a doctor

who can help manage your heart health.

