October 10, 2018, Adrian suffered multiple cardiac arrests

Adrian on October 9, 2018

October is Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month

Adrian's Story

On October 10, 2018, I was participating in a game of Tug of War with my homeroom class at Monacan High School for our school's "Battle of the Freshest" competition. During the game, I suddenly collapsed due to suffering a heart arrhythmia. With quick thinking by school administration, faculty,and staff, paramedics were called to the school. While in route to the ER, I suffered multiple cardiac arrests and paramedics had to perform defibrillation using electric paddles to restart my heart a total of three times.

After 12 hours on life support, I began to recover from the cardiac arrest. Soon after, I was diagnosed with ARVC (Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Cardiomyopathy), a genetic disease of the heart that can cause a heart arrhythmia while exercising vigorously or performing strenuous activities, especially while competing in a sporting event.

Doctors gave me a 2% chance to live from my cardiac arrest episode. By the grace of God, I was able to make a full recovery, and was released from the hospital after only 8 days! With prayer, careful monitoring, and medication to regulate my heart rhythms, I have been able to resume my life before suffering cardiac arrest. Please continue reading for more information about Sudden Cardiac Death, ARVC and how YOU can help save lives!

The Facts

HEART AWARENESS

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. It strikes people of all ages who may seem to be healthy, even children and teens. When SCA happens, the person collapses and doesn't respond or breathe normally.

What Causes Sudden Cardiac Death?

Most sudden cardiac deaths are caused by abnormal heart rhythms called arrhythmias. The most common life-threatening arrhythmia is ventricular fibrillation, which is an erratic, disorganized firing of impulses from the ventricles (the heart's lower chambers). When this occurs, the heart is unable to pump blood and death will occur within minutes, if left untreated.

What is ARVC?

Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC) is a form of heart disease that usually appears in adulthood. ARVC is a disorder of the myocardium, which is the muscular wall of the heart. This condition causes part of the myocardium to break down over time, increasing the risk of an abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia) and sudden death.

ARVC may not cause any symptoms in its early stages. However, affected individuals may still be at risk of sudden death, especially during strenuous exercise. When symptoms occur, they most commonly include a sensation of fluttering or pounding in the chest (palpitations), light-headedness, and fainting (syncope). Over time, ARVC can also cause shortness of breath and abnormal swelling in the legs or abdomen.

How You Can Help

TAKE ACTION

More than 350,000 deaths occur each year as a result of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). In fact, SCA claims one life every two minutes, taking more lives each year than breast cancer, lung cancer, or AIDS. To decrease the death toll from SCA, it is important to understand what SCA is, what warning signs are, and how to respond and prevent SCA from occurring. More than 65 percent of Americans not only underestimate the seriousness of SCA, but also believe SCA is a type of heart attack. But they are not the same thing.

October is Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month, which represents a critical initiative by the Heart Rhythm Society to raise awareness for Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) and help the public become more familiar with what it is, how it affects people, and what can be done to help save lives.

Time-to-treatment is critical when considering the chance of survival for an SCA victim. Ninety-five percent of those who experience SCA die because they do not receive life-saving defibrillation within four to six minutes, before brain and permanent death start to occur.

Despite such a high number of SCA deaths annually, SCA can be treated successfully if caught in time by using CPR and/or defibrillation with an automatic external defibrillator (AED). If a rescuer can perform these lifesaving tasks, survival rates increase from an average of 10 percent to 50 percent.

Get CPR and AED Certified!

Anyone can learn CPR and everyone should. The American Heart Association reports that 70% of Americans feel helpless to act in the event of a cardiac emergency because they either do not know how to effectively administer CPR or their training has lapsed.

For more information on how to become CPR/AED trained, visit: https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/aed/aed-training