Surviving a Cardiac Arrest...

Now What?



An educational resource addressing psychological, social and quality-of-life concerns in survivors and family members after cardiac arrest, published by the



"After my cardiac arrest, it was months before I was emotionally ready to reach out to others and address what happened. For a while, I would only share my experience with another survivor from my state. Soon I discovered SCAA and learned I wasn't alone. From the personal connections I made with other survivors and advocates to the educational resources, I found support, strength and encouragement to live and enjoy life again."

Mary Tappe SCA Survivor Leader, SCAA Denver Affiliate **S**urviving cardiac arrest is rare. For the six percent of patients who do survive, recovery is often a long process that simply doesn't end with the insertion of an ICD or application of an external wearable defibrillator.

Facts of Life After SCA:

- 90% of SCA survivors experience impairment in performing daily life skills
- Nearly 40% of patients experience symptoms of anxiety after cardiac arrest
- A third of patients with ICDs require coping skills to address fear of potential shocks
- Typical adjustment period can take 6-12 months
- Over 50% of SCA survivors are diagnosed with psychiatric disorders



SCA is traumatic for survivors but also can be life-changing for their loved ones. In fact, it's common for both survivors and family members to experience challenges adjusting to life after cardiac arrest. Many report feelings of:

- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Fear
- Loss of interest, depressed
- Loneliness
- Inability to relate to others
- Guilt

ICDs and other devices can monitor the heart and prevent future cardiac arrests, but they can't heal emotions, calm anxiety or ease fears. That's where the <u>Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association</u> (SCAA) and its nationwide network of SCA survivors, resources and advocates can help!

SCAA Connects

In addition to medical professionals, emergency responders and patient advocates, SCAA has the largest gathering of survivors and their family members in the United States. SCAA connects survivors and patients at risk from across the country through "Inspire" - an interactive online support community, where together they can share concerns, discuss medical issues



and confide in others. Visit <u>www.inspire.com/qroups/sudden-cardiac-arrest-association</u> for more details.

Each survivor's experience is unique, and we realize that. The <u>Survivor Page</u> of the SCAA Web site is a forum that allows survivors to share their individual experiences and show the world they are not alone. Located on the Web at *www.suddencardiacarrest.org*, these stories chronicle life before and after SCA along with the variety of emotions patients experience and prove to be helpful outlets in the recovery process.

Personal support is given through SCAA's nationwide network of <u>50+ chapters</u>. Many operate or collaborate with local support groups which meet regularly to help the healing process. They also conduct a variety of CPR/AED training sessions, hold fundraisers to donate AEDs in their local communities, work with cardiologists to provide free heart screening tests for students.

SCAA Educates

Striking without warning, SCA leaves patients and their loved ones with a multitude of questions. Immediate care is often characterized by numerous examinations, tests and treatments. And quite frankly, it all can be overwhelming and confusing.

The SCAA Web site provides a variety of educational resources and materials on the etiology of cardiac arrest, its risk factors, treatments and preventive measures. **Patient materials** cover a broad array of topics, including:

- ◆ Cardiac Rehabilitation
- ♦ Living with ICDs
- ◆ Lab tests
- ◆ Therapeutic Hypothermia
- ♦ CPR
- ♦ AEDs
- ♦ Atherosclerosis
- ◆ Coronary Artery Disease
- ♦ Risk Factors







In addition, SCAA's <u>interactive media platform</u> reaches the general public through a variety educational videos, public service announcements (PSAs) and media awareness campaigns. Our established presence on TV, radio and the Web helps inform everyday individuals of the public health crisis of cardiac arrest.

SCAA Advocates

SCAA works toward establishing a nationwide response to cardiac arrest, in which communities are better prepared and bystanders are trained to offer assistance in cardiac emergencies. To expand the number of publicly accessible AEDs, we support federal and state legislation that require the devices in schools and other public places.

SCAA Partners

To increase the number of bystanders, SCAA works with state governments to revamp Good Samaritan laws to include protection of bystanders using AEDs.

And in promoting local ordinances, we join forces with EMS agencies, police and fire departments across the country to recognize the life-saving efforts of emergency responders and dedication of survivors.

Additional Resources for the Rehabilitation & Recovery Process

Beyond these core pillars, SCAA's focus on the physical, mental and emotional aspects of complete SCA recovery continues to expand as we:

- link survivors living with ICDs to ongoing nationwide research studies
- provide patients access with medical professionals including mental health specialists
- share overall heart-healthy lifestyle guidance

SCAA is the nation's leading nonprofit advocacy organization exclusively dedicated to SCA awareness, and prevention to create safer communities that are better prepared to respond to cardiovascular emergencies and increase survival from SCA. Visit www.suddencardiacarrest.org to learn more.

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