

# COVID-19 Guidelines for Athletes Engaging in Sport

Updated 7/1/2020

## Overview

COVID-19 continues to be a concern for all athletes engaging in sport. It is likely COVID-19 will remain a public health issue until a vaccine is available. Safe participation in sport is possible if every athlete takes individual responsibility for their safety. Outdoor running is generally safe when social distancing protocols are followed.

## Risk Categories for Sport

Category	Location of play/interaction with other athletes	Examples
Low to no-risk	Outdoors	Golf, tennis
Low risk	Outdoors, rare contact with other athletes	Cross country, track, yoga, bowling, softball, baseball, swimming
Moderate risk	Indoors or outdoors with limited contact with other athletes	Lacrosse, field hockey, soccer
High risk	Indoors or outdoors with frequent, extensive contact with other athletes	Wrestling, football, rugby, basketball, volleyball

**Low to no risk activities** naturally allow for social distance and limited interactions with others. Athletes engaged in low risk sports should avoid sharing equipment, limit interactions with others, train with the same people consistently, and stay socially distanced at all times. Masks should be worn indoors or when social distance outside is not possible.

**Low risk activities** typically occur outside where social distancing is possible. While these sports involve teams, they may be practiced and competitions held with adequate distance between athletes. Precautions should be taken when athletes interact. Equipment should never be shared including water bottles, towels, or other items. Masks should be worn indoors or when social distance outside is not possible.

**Moderate risk activities** occur indoor or outdoors with frequent contact with other athletes. However, these sports allow opportunities for adequate spacing while played

outside, or involve spacing or individual event participation if indoors. Athletes engaging in moderate risk sports must be constantly aware of distance between themselves and others. If possible, coaches should group athletes with consistency to reduce exposure. Whenever possible, face coverings should be worn while indoors and around other athletes outside. Athletes should avoid sharing equipment, especially water bottles.

**High risk activities** should be avoided during the pandemic, unless community containment of COVID-19 is present. A community must reach either less than 3% of persons lab testing positive, or multiple consecutive weeks of decreasing case counts or no new cases for multiple weeks. These activities present significant risk as close, frequent interaction is unavoidable in these sports. In the case of strength training, adequate sanitization is possible, though not recommended for large high school sports teams.

### **How is COVID-19 spread?**

- COVID-19 is mainly spread person to person. The virus moves through the air when an infected person breathes, speaks, laughs, coughs, sneezes, sings, or shouts.
- An infected person does not always know when he or she is infected.
- People with COVID-19 often have NO symptoms three days before feeling sick.
- People with COVID-19 are most contagious three days before through several days after feeling sick.
- You can get sick by touching a surface or object after someone with COVID-19 touched the same surface or object, but that is not a common way to get the virus.
- A person with COVID-19 may never feel sick, but can spread the virus. This is not common, but is possible.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| ✓ Fever or chills                             | ✓ Sore throat              |
| ✓ Cough                                       | ✓ Congestion or runny nose |
| ✓ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | ✓ Nausea or vomiting       |
| ✓ Fatigue                                     | ✓ Diarrhea                 |
| ✓ Muscle or body aches                        |                            |
| ✓ Headache                                    |                            |
| ✓ New loss of taste or smell                  |                            |

Younger people may only have one or a few of these symptoms and are likely to have mild illness.

### **General individual safety guidelines for student athletes**

- 1) Maintain consistent spacing between you and other athletes. Spacing should be at least six feet, whenever possible.
- 2) Bring your own water bottle to practices. Do not share your water bottle or use another person's water bottle or other equipment.
- 3) Use hand sanitizer often, especially after contact with a shared surface.
- 4) Wear a mask when social distancing is not possible.
- 5) Train with the same people as much as possible.
- 6) Limit your training group to 10 people.
- 7) Notify your coach IMMEDIATELY if you–
  - are exposed to a case of COVID-19
  - are exposed to anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 in your home
  - experience any symptoms of COVID-19
  - test positive for COVID-19
- 8) If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, talk to your parents about getting tested. Stay home from group practices until you test negative. If you do not have COVID-19, you are generally safe to return to practice 24 hours after symptoms go away. Always consult your doctor if you have questions about illness.

### **How do I access COVID-19 testing?**

Call your healthcare provider. All healthcare systems in Iowa have protocols for testing, which may differ by provider. Call ahead for instructions on how to be tested. You may also go to [www.testiowa.com](http://www.testiowa.com) to take an assessment and be assigned a test site. **Your athlete must stay isolated from family, friends, school, and sports while your test results are pending.**

### **What if an athlete's test is positive?**

Notify your athlete's coach immediately. Public health officials will likely contact the athlete and ask for information about who the athlete may have exposed, and how the athlete was exposed. You should also receive guidance as to when it is safe for the athlete to return to being around family and friends, and returning to school and sport.

**What if an athlete's test is positive, but he or she has no symptoms?**

The athlete needs to wait **10 days** before he or she can return to sport. The athlete should remain in isolation from family, friends, school and sport for 10 days after a positive test with no symptoms. Even without symptoms, he or she may still spread the virus and make others sick.

**What if my athlete's test is negative?**

As long as the athlete feels well, he or she may resume normal activities.

**Be a SMART athlete**

**S**tay home when sick.

**M**aintain SIX feet of distance between you and other athletes.

**A**ct responsibly. Avoid parties, large gatherings, and interaction with people you do not know well.

**R**est when needed.

**T**rain only when you feel well.

For more information about COVID-19, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.