

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Reducing Risks for Transmission of COVID-19 and other Respiratory Viruses during Interscholastic, Youth and other Amateur Sport Activities

This guidance has been updated to assist youth athletic organizations and individual participants with routine management and outbreak response for COVID-19 and other respiratory viral diseases. As always, DPH will continue to monitor available data and will issue updated guidance if/when it is necessary and appropriate.

With community transmission of COVID-19 and the burden on hospitals in our state easing significantly, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is advising that athletic organizations and participants can begin to scale back on the strict mitigation strategies that have been in place in recent months. DPH recommends that athletic organizations stay current with guidance from federal, state, and local agencies, and review and revise plans as appropriate if transmission activity for COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses increases and/or in response to localized outbreaks, including increased cases among sports leagues, teams, or participants.

At any level of transmission activity for COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases, DPH recommends that athletic organizations continue to:

- Monitor COVID-19 community transmission levels by visiting the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) as well as the [DPH state COVID-19 tracking website](#) frequently to remain aware of the current status of COVID-19 in Connecticut. Organizers should also be aware of any local or facility-specific mandates that may be in place that differ from state or federal agency requirements.
- Stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination as vaccination is currently the most important and effective strategy for suppressing COVID-19 impacts on athletic activities. Vaccinated individuals are **less likely to have severe COVID-19 complications**, including hospitalization and can **avoid absences from school or work** and/or **cancellations of athletic activities**.
- Support participants who continue to wear a mask and/or continue to take other precautions during athletic activities and gatherings even when those precautions are not required.

- Revise existing and/or develop new specific written policies and procedures for reducing the risk of COVID-19 and respiratory virus transmission, including *policies for return-to-play* for athletes recovering from COVID-19, so that those strategies can be deployed quickly during periods of increased respiratory virus activity or in response to outbreaks.
- Ensure that any coaches, athletes, or other participants who test positive for COVID-19 follow CDC's *COVID-19 isolation protocols*, including remaining away from team activities for the prescribed isolation period and following any other recommended procedures upon return.

When respiratory disease activity, including COVID-19, is increasing or high, or in response to outbreaks among teams, DPH recommends that athletic organizations add the following strategies:

- Recommend or require mask wearing on a temporary basis by all participants when indoors, as consistent and correct use of a well-fitting mask is still an excellent preventative measure against COVID-19 transmission when *community levels are high* or local transmission activity is increased.
- Communicate to coaches, athletes, and parents the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 during athletic activities and the need for strict compliance with protocols, including *quarantine/isolation of cases and close contacts*.
- Work in cooperation with local health officials and make it clear to coaches and participant families that complete information-sharing and cooperation with local and state health authorities is a requirement of participation with their athletic organization.
- Consider specific rule changes on a temporary basis that are designed to reduce the frequency, intensity, and duration of contact between participants.
- Limit team-based group activities and gatherings (e.g., pre-game meals, team parties, etc.) in order to reduce the risk of a team outbreak that may affect not only the ability to continue to practice and play but also the ability of children and adults to attend school and work.



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