

## safety tips for returning to sports

In areas where the rates of coronavirus (COVID-19) are steady or dropping, many organized sports programs are gearing up for game day.

Experts say that playing sports with safeguards in place — like cleaning shared equipment and washing hands often, wearing a mask or face covering, and social (or physical) distancing — will help protect athletes from coronavirus.

### **how can I help keep my child safe?**

Parents, coaches, and teams can help prevent the spread of the coronavirus by sharing a safety plan with athletes and their families. Before letting your child play any sport, ask about the rules and expectations.

Here's what you should know:

- Kids should not play if they're sick or have had close contact with someone with coronavirus. If an athlete or family member has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 — even without symptoms — they should not go to practice or games until their doctor says that it is safe to return.
- Bring your own equipment, when possible. This might include bats, balls, protective gear, face masks or coverings, water bottles, hand sanitizer, and towels. Label all equipment and personal items.
- Players should wash their hands well and often. They should wash hands before going to practice and after touching shared equipment. Pack hand sanitizer, especially if soap and water aren't available.
- Coaches, referees and umpires, parents, and spectators should wear masks or face coverings at all times.
- Players should wear masks or cloth face coverings on arrival to practice and games, during instructions, in huddles, and on the sidelines. They should wear them during warm-ups, drills, and low-intensity activity.
- Players should not wear masks when they do:
  - high-intensity activities, like running, if it feels harder to breathe when wearing one
  - water sports
  - sports where the mask could get caught on equipment or accidentally cover the eyes (like gymnastics or cheerleading)
- Shared surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected. Things that get touched a lot (such as benches, faucets, and doorknobs) should be cleaned at least daily and as often as possible. Shared equipment should be limited and cleaned between each use.

*(continued on reverse)*



- Social distancing (or physical distancing) is a must. Kids playing sports should stay 6 feet apart, whenever possible. This includes during instructions, when warming up, practicing drills or conditioning, on the sidelines, in huddles, and before and after practice. Coaches, parents, and spectators should stay at least 6 feet apart at all times. Adult staff and volunteers can help maintain distancing among players, coaches, and spectators.
- Group size may be smaller. Limiting team size will help prevent the spread of the virus. Leagues may limit team sizes, stagger practices, and place students in cohorts. Cohorts (also called pods) are groups of players and coaches that stay together throughout the season.

Leagues are getting creative. Sports teams are figuring out new ways to reduce the spread of germs. They might:

- Practice and play outside whenever possible.
- Mark the field or court to show kids where to stand and practice drills.
- Consider within-team scrimmages rather than full competition between teams. If this isn't possible, compete with teams in your local area. Traveling outside your local area may increase the spread of the virus.

These practices can make coronavirus less likely to spread among players, coaches, parents, and spectators. But they can't prevent it entirely. So the league should have a plan ready in case someone gets sick or there's an outbreak.

Visit the CDC's website for more information on returning to sports safely.



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