

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPORTS DURING CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

The St. Charles County Department of Public Health **recommends against** holding sporting events at this time due to the increase in cases and spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic in our community. The number of positive cases in younger residents is on the rise and long-term effects of the disease are unknown. Should organizations and schools proceed with sports activities, the Department of Public Health strongly advises following the best practices and guidelines outlined below.

The information regarding SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing the COVID-19 illness, is changing rapidly. As a result, guidance given nationally and in St. Charles County is subject to change. The guidelines provided in this document will be reviewed and updated based on new scientific information and local circumstances, and therefore, may change periodically.

SET UP AND GAME PLAY

Engage in activity with the lowest risk possible:

- Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members.
- Increasing Risk: Team-based practice.
- More Risk: Within-team competition.
- Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.
- Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

Recommendations regardless of risk level:

- Limit the number of individuals, including coaches, in a single space, allowing social distancing of at least 6 feet.
- Allow no more than 10 individuals, including coaches, in that single space.
- Separated spaces with a barrier or large enough distance that allows groups to maintain appropriate distance between one another.
- Do not allow interaction between groups.
- Wipe down all workout machines and equipment with approved disinfectants after each use.
- Athletes should not interact with anyone outside the area where their individual workout is located.

Activities that are NOT recommended:

Competitive play of any kind, whether or not teams and leagues are school sponsored or affiliated with other organizations.

Additional examples of activities that are NOT recommended:

- Playing without masks except when actively involved in strenuous physical activity;
- Playing within 6 feet of another player;
- Play between 2 teams, whether competitive or not;
- Intra-squad competitions;
- Play with more than 10 people gathering in the space for play;
- Any activity other than practice.

For all activities:

Enact a policy that athletes, coaches, and officials must undergo a health screening prior to starting any activity.

- Designate a consistent person to provide health screenings. This person should wear a face mask and gloves when screening others.
- Screen each individual by asking if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:
 - Fever (temperature greater than 100.4 F.)
 - New or worsening cough
 - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
 - Sore throat, different than your seasonal allergies
 - New loss of smell and/or taste
 - Diarrhea or vomiting
 - Ask if they have a household or close contact who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks.
 - Check each person for fever using a thermometer. 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and above is considered a fever.
- If an athlete, coach, or official reports affirmative to any of the above COVID-19 screening questions or has a fever they shall be sent home immediately. The athlete, coach, or official shall not be allowed back until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours with no use of medication.

If activities that are NOT recommended do occur, use the following precautions to reduce risk:

- The use of locker rooms is not recommended. If they are used, proper social distancing should apply within the locker room.
- Utilize outdoor facilities instead of indoor when possible. If playing inside, ensure ventilation systems or fans operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.
- Decrease team sizes, as feasible.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations or put in place other protocols to limit congregation of parents or caregivers as much as possible.
- Limit spectators, particularly any unnecessary visitors such as non-family spectators, volunteers, non-participating athletes, etc.
- Visitors and spectators should practice social distancing with those outside of their household, wear face coverings when necessary, and should not be allowed to congregate in the parking lot or athletic areas.
- Limit the use of carpools or van pools. When riding in an automobile to a sports event, encourage players to ride to the sports event with persons living in their same household.
- Limit sports participation to staff and athletes who live in the local geographic area (e.g., community, city, town, county or region).
- Limit the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts) by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available.
- Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions that increase their risk for complications from COVID-19 should consider delaying participation or taking extra precautions before resuming athletic activities.
 - Conditions include but are not limited to lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart disease, diabetes, pregnancy, kidney disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and conditions that compromise the immune system such as cancer, organ transplants, and HIV or AIDS.
- Discontinue unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, huddles, or hugs.
- Athletic trainer facilities should reflect social distancing measures and trainers should wear face coverings when providing care or treatment.
- Communicate messages that promote social distancing, hand washing, and face coverings by placing signs in highly visible areas such as entrances and exits. Where possible, broadcast public service announcements reminding participants of social distancing.
- If food/drink is offered to players, use only pre-packaged items for each attendee.
- If shower facilities are necessary, ensure social distancing is maintained during use. Towels should be laundered after each use and facilities should be cleaned between each group's use.
- If facilities offer concession/dining areas follow the [Restaurant and Food Service Providers Guidelines](#)

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

Consider installing mobile handwashing and sanitizing stations.

Develop a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfection.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the field, court, or play surface at least daily, or between uses as much as possible.

Shared spaces such as locker rooms/restrooms should be cleaned multiple times each day that they are in use.

Ensure safe and correct use of disinfectants per the manufacturer's directions.

Use products that meet EPA disinfection criteria for COVID-19 with sufficient contact time (many require the surface to be wet for up to 10 minutes).

Store cleaning/sanitizing products securely away from children.

Athletic trainer facilities and equipment should be disinfected after every use.

Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.

Do not let players share water bottles, towels, clothing, or other personal items.

Personal athletic clothing and equipment such as jerseys, uniforms, helmets, etc. should not be shared between players and should be cleaned after every use.

Ensure sufficient time for facility disinfection between games and practices.

TRAINING AND STAFFING

Train all staff and participants on the importance and expectation of increased frequency of handwashing, avoid the touching of hands to face, and the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol.

Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols.

Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices for coaches, officials, and staff that enable employees to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, or caring for someone who is sick.

Always require staff and officials to wear face coverings, as well as athletes who are not actively playing or training. Such coverings should be cleaned or replaced daily.

Identify adult staff members or volunteers to help maintain social distancing among youth, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.

Identify an adult staff member or volunteer to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of objects and equipment, particularly for any shared equipment or frequently touched surfaces.

Participants can protect the health of their peers by agreeing to disclose positive COVID test results to the team; organizers and coaches should have a plan for excluding anyone quarantined by the health department.

PREPARING FOR WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

If someone does get sick during practice or at a game, have a plan in place to isolate and transport that person to their home or healthcare facility.

Immediately separate coaches, staff, officials, and players with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at any sports activity.

Maintain records of who was present at each activity and location, to include names, contact information, and when various activities begin and end.

In the event of a known COVID-19 positive case, be prepared to make contact information of attendees available; attendees include but are not limited to athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators.

Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them. If possible, wait 24 hours before cleaning the area.

Develop return-to-play guidelines for athletes following COVID-19 infection.

- Individuals who test positive and their close contacts are not allowed to return to play, coach, officiate, or spectate until released from quarantine by the St. Charles County Department of Public Health.
- Athletes returning to play should increase participation in a gradual and individualized process while monitoring for fatigue and recurring symptoms.

For further guidance on what to in the event of exposure to COVID-19, call the St Charles County COVID Hotline at 636-949-1899.

HELPFUL LINKS

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

Missouri Governor Mike Parson's "Show-Me Strong Recovery" Plan and FAQ's

<https://showmestrong.mo.gov/>

EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility (CDC recommendations)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

St. Charles County Guidelines for Residents

<https://www.sccmo.org/2123/COVID-19-Guidelines-for-Residents>

St. Charles County Sample Screening Policy

<https://www.sccmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/15560/Sample-Screening-Policy-PDF>