



Interim Guidance for Athletics issued May 24, 2021

Recent Updates

- Based on the most current [CDC Guidance](#):
 - All individuals can gather outdoors for purposes of organized sports without wearing face masks. This applies to both contact and non-contact organized sports.
 - MDHHS recommends that individuals who are not fully vaccinated continue to wear face masks while participating in contact sports both outdoors and indoors.
 - Fully vaccinated individuals can gather indoors for the purposes of organized sports without wearing face masks. This applies to both contact and non-contact organized sports.
 - Unvaccinated individuals participating in outdoor organized contact sports without face masks do not need to test more frequently than weekly.

Executive Summary

- Organized sports, like other activities where participants gather and interact in close proximity across households, pose COVID-19 risks. Depending on COVID-19 infection rates, sports may need certain mitigation measures to avoid exposing participants to unacceptable infection risk and risk of accelerated virus transmission in their communities.
- Different restrictions and mitigation measures may be needed for unvaccinated individuals based on the particular risk of each sport and current rates of transmission:
 - Contact sports, such as football, lacrosse, and wrestling, pose a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19 to participants, coaches, and the general community, than non-contact sports;
 - Indoor sports pose higher risks than outdoor sports; and

- Sports where a face mask cannot be safely worn, such as wrestling and water polo, pose higher risks than sports where participants can wear face masks throughout play.
- Mitigation measures are described below for non-contact sports and contact sports. Additional mitigation measures, including more frequent testing, are described for contact sports in which unvaccinated individuals cannot safely wear face masks indoors or when community transmission is high.

Mandatory Provisions

The following provisions are mandatory pursuant to the [Gatherings and Face Mask Order](#) issued on May 24, 2021:

Testing Requirements for Unvaccinated Participants

- Unvaccinated participants ages 13 – 19 participating in contact and non-contact organized sports must test for SARS-CoV-2 on at least a weekly basis. These requirements apply to both school and non-school sponsored sports.
 - Unvaccinated participants ages 13 – 19 can only participate in organized sports with proof of a negative diagnostic test (antigen or RT-PCR) on at least a weekly basis.
- Participants who have recovered from confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months and remain symptom-free may gather for purposes of sports practice or competition without testing if:
 - they can provide a letter from their doctor attesting that they fall into this category, or
 - they have proof of a positive antigen or RT-PCR diagnostic test within three months. An antibody test is not sufficient.
- Fully vaccinated persons are not subject to the sports testing requirements set forth in Section 3(a) of the [Gatherings and Face Masks Order](#) unless they have COVID-19-like symptoms.

Face Mask Requirements

Unvaccinated Individuals:

- Unvaccinated participants, coaches, and other team personnel must wear a face mask at all times when indoors, unless a sports organizer has determined that wearing face masks would be unsafe and all participants have been tested and received negative tests as outlined above in the **Testing Requirements** section.
- For non-contact and contact sports practice and competition, face masks are not required for unvaccinated individuals when conducted outdoors.

Fully Vaccinated Individuals:

- Fully vaccinated participants, coaches, and other team personnel do not need to wear face masks while participating in organized sports, indoors and outdoors. This applies to both contact and non-contact organized sports.

NOTE: The testing and face mask requirements set forth above are minimum requirements and should not be understood to override or supplant any stricter protocols that a sports organizer may require for its members or participants.

Recommended Practices

1. Individuals Should Continue to Wear Face Masks while Participating in Contact Sport Activities.

- While face masks are not required for organized sports practice or competition outdoors, MDHHS strongly recommends that individuals who are not fully vaccinated participating in contact sports activities remain masked outdoors.

2. Isolate or Quarantine Away from Others if Symptoms or Exposure to COVID-19

- Individuals, including those who are fully vaccinated, should not play or practice while [symptomatic](#) even with a negative COVID-19 test, per [current CDC guidelines](#).
- Teams should institute a screen for symptoms before play or practice. Teams may sign up for and use the free [MI Symptoms tool](#) to complete self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Unvaccinated individuals should not play or practice while a member of their household is exhibiting any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

- Unvaccinated individuals should not play or practice if deemed a [close contact](#) of someone infected with COVID-19 and should quarantine at home as required by the local health department.
- Sports team staff should maintain prompt follow-up for case investigation and full contact tracing (including affected contacts outside of the team).
- If any individual tests positive:
 - **with an antigen test:** that individual should not gather for the purposes of competitive or team activities for the duration of their infectious period as determined by [current CDC guidance](#), unless that individual is asymptomatic and obtains a negative RT-PCR test within 48 hours of the initial positive antigen test.
 - **with a RT-PCR test:** that individual should not gather for purposes of competitive or team activities for the duration of their infectious period, defined as 10 days from date of first positive test (if asymptomatic) or as determined by [current CDC guidance](#) (if symptomatic).

3. Practice Safer Individual Behaviors

- Wash hands frequently and cover coughs and sneezes.
- Do not share items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. Use separate towels, clothing, or other items used to wipe faces or hands.
- Individuals should use their own gear/equipment and minimize sharing equipment.
- Individuals are encouraged to provide their own food, drinks, and/or water.
- Refrain from handshakes, hugs, fist bumps, high fives or contact celebrations.
- Refrain from spitting, chewing gum or tobacco in the event areas.
- During the two weeks before and after unmasked practice or competition, unvaccinated participants should completely avoid participation in non-team social gatherings, which should be strictly enforced by team staff and coaches.
- For younger participants, it may be beneficial for parents or other household members to monitor their children, make sure they follow social distancing and take other protective actions (e.g., younger children could sit with parents or caregivers instead of in a dugout or group area).

4. Clean and Disinfect Often

- Ensure enough time between each practice or competition to allow for proper cleaning and disinfection of the facilities and shared equipment.
- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene practices for participants, spectators, and employees, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content, paper towels, and tissues.
- 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.
- When disinfecting, use products that meet [EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer. Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Provide individual disinfectant wipes in bathrooms.

5. Choose Safer Options for Practices and Competitions for Unvaccinated Individuals

- Prioritize outdoor, as opposed to indoor, practice and play as much as possible.
- If playing inside, ensure ventilation systems or fans operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms) to participants or others using the facility.
- Avoid areas with poor ventilation (weight rooms, small spaces) where social distancing cannot be implemented.
- Prioritize non-contact activity, like conditioning and drills, where social distancing can be maintained.
- Small groups may help reduce the risk of teamwide COVID-19 outbreaks as they allow for greater social distancing, easier contact tracing, and reducing the number of participants that need to be quarantined.
- Minimize travel to other communities and regions for practices and competition.

- Limit the use of carpools, buses, or other shared transportation between all persons outside the same household. When riding in an automobile to a practice or competition, encourage individuals to ride with persons living in their same household and to always wear a face mask if traveling with persons outside the same household. The CDC recommends use of masks by all in planes, trains, busses and other forms of communal transportation.
- The total capacity of stadiums and arenas may be limited by local or state regulation. Find the latest state regulations at www.Michigan.gov/coronavirus.

6. Utilize Safer Face Mask Options

- Adjusting the level and intensity of physical activity and taking frequent rest breaks can improve toleration of a face mask.
- Any face mask that becomes saturated with sweat should be changed immediately.

7. Utilize Additional Testing

- Even where it is not required, sports organizers are encouraged to administer a testing program as specified in the **Testing Requirements** section above.
- Testing of unvaccinated individuals is recommended before any inter-team competition, especially before participants come into close contact with other participants from outside the local community.

Resources for Sports Testing

MDHHS is here to support testing your participants and keeping your sports programs safe. Please visit our [MI Safer Sports Testing Program](#) website for information including enrollment forms, antigen test result reporting, test order surveys, training videos, and FAQs.

For additional resources on mitigation measures and resources available to participants and teams, please see the following links:

- [MDHHS COVID-19 Information and Resources for Athletics](#) (URL: bit.ly/3pXCwMI)
- [MDHHS Organized Sports Testing Frequently Asked Questions](#) (URL: bit.ly/3vGjux4)
- [MI Safer Sports Testing Program](#) (URL: bit.ly/3qYFsIB)

- [CDC: Playing Sports](https://bit.ly/3rJbyZZ) (URL: bit.ly/3rJbyZZ)
- [CDC: Considerations for Youth Sports Administrators](https://bit.ly/3aFfynm) (URL: bit.ly/3aFfynm)
- [MDHHS Antigen Tests FAQ and Resources](https://bit.ly/3cEMAEQ) (URL: bit.ly/3cEMAEQ)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](https://bit.ly/2LsSbEO) face masking recommendations for contact sports (URL: bit.ly/2LsSbEO)

For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus. You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 or email COVID19@michigan.gov.

Note: on May 26, 2021, a link on page 2 of this document was updated to correctly refer to the Gatherings and Face Mask order issued on May 24, 2021