

## should your child return to sports?

Young athletes are ready to get back to sports after missing out because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. But many parents wonder if it's safe.

Here's what to know when deciding if returning to sports is right for your child.

### **is your child (or household member) at risk for coronavirus?**

Some people are more likely to get very sick from coronavirus. This includes adults age 65 or older and people with health problems, such as asthma, diabetes, or a weak immune system. Babies younger than 12 months old might get sicker from coronavirus than older kids.

If your child has a health problem, or lives with someone in a high-risk group, talk to your doctor about whether it's safe for your child to return to sports. Kids at high risk may need to do individual activities or at-home training.

### **is it safe to play in your area?**

Before signing up for teams and recreational leagues, be sure that local and state governments are allowing kids to play organized sports.

Consider how many COVID cases are in your area. If cases are sharply rising, it might not be safe for kids to play sports. In areas with few cases, returning to sports may be reasonable.

To find out if cases in your area are increasing, decreasing, or staying steady, call your local health department or visit their website. You also can check your local newspaper. Many news outlets regularly report this information by area or zip code.

### **what do health experts say about playing sports during the pandemic?**

Playing sports provides many benefits. Getting fit, increasing strength, and improving heart health and mental health are just some of them.

Experts say that playing sports with safeguards in place can help protect athletes from coronavirus. Precautions include:

- Washing hands well and often or using hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available
- Wearing masks or face coverings
- Social distancing (also called physical distancing)
- Regular cleaning of shared equipment and facilities

*(continued on reverse)*



Kids are less likely to catch and spread the virus than adults. But longer, closer contact with an infected person increases their risk, as can the sport they play and the setting. Things to consider include:

- **Number of players.** Smaller groups are better than large teams.
- **Amount of close contact.** Sports like basketball and wrestling have more contact than sports like tennis and baseball.
- **An indoor versus outdoor setting.** It's safer to hold activities outdoors.
- **The size of an indoor facility and its ventilation.** Good airflow can lower the chances of infection.
- **Whether facilities are shared.** Facilities and equipment should be cleaned between uses.
- **Travel outside of the community.** Traveling may increase the chances of spreading the virus.

### **what else should I know?**

Deciding whether to let your child play sports now is a personal choice that involves many things, such as the benefits that sports provide and your family's health and safety. Talk to your doctor if you have questions. You also can check the CDC's website for information on returning to sports safely.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to change, stay flexible. Decisions you make now might not be the best choice later in the year.



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