



# COVID-19 Prevention at Youth Sports Information for Parents & Guardians



Youth recreational sports programs, including school sports teams, can operate in Los Angeles County by following the [Protocol for Organized Youth Sports](#) and the [Exposure Management Plan for Youth Sports](#). The protocol and plan list rules and recommendations that provide multiple layers of protection to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and enhance safety of athletes, team members, coaches, and spectators.

Sports with close physical contact between players, especially if it is frequent or prolonged, have the highest risk for spreading COVID-19, especially when they take place indoors. Where athletes train, practice and compete also impacts risk. It is recommended that, when possible, indoor youth sports be moved outdoors where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is much lower. Screening testing and mask requirements vary according to the risk of the sport and whether it is indoors or outdoors (see sections below for details). These safety measures are in place while rates of COVID-19 transmission are high in Los Angeles County and will be re-assessed by the Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) as the situation changes.

You can help by explaining the rules and recommendations to your child. Please contact your child's sports program for more information or if you have questions.

## Vaccination is strongly recommended for everyone age 5 years and older.

- **Vaccination is the best way to protect against COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free to everyone, regardless of immigration status.**
- Having all athletes, coaches, support staff, and volunteers in your youth sports league fully vaccinated will greatly decrease the risk of transmission of the virus among teammates and between teams. It will also decrease disruption to the team if there is contact with a person with COVID-19 (see quarantine below).
- People who are fully vaccinated do not need to participate in routine screening testing.
- Vaccines are widely available across LA County without an appointment. Visit [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://www.vaccinatelacounty.com) and click on "[How To Get Vaccinated](#)" to find a location near you or call the **Vaccine Call Center** at **833-540-0473**, open daily 8:00 am to 8:30 pm.
- Talk with your child's doctor about any concerns. Learn more at [COVID-19 Vaccine Facts for Parents](#).

## Anyone who is sick or under isolation or quarantine orders must stay home and will be excluded from practice and games.

- Athletes, coaches, support staff, volunteers and spectators should check for symptoms before attending any youth sports activity. Anyone who has a fever or other COVID-19 symptom should stay home. If a person develops symptoms during practice or a game, they will be isolated from others and may be sent home. For symptoms of COVID-19 see [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare).
- If an athlete, coach, support staff, or volunteer is diagnosed with COVID-19, the [Exposure Management Plan](#) will be followed. This includes testing everyone, regardless of vaccination status, for 2 weeks. The person with COVID-19 must follow the isolation instructions at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- Fully vaccinated athletes who are exposed to someone with COVID-19 do not need to quarantine and can continue to participate in the youth sport activity as long as they remain asymptomatic and continue to test negative for COVID-19 diagnosis.



## COVID-19 Prevention at Youth Sports

### Masks are required indoors.

- Everyone (including athletes, coaches, support staff, volunteers, and spectators) must wear a mask indoors, regardless of their vaccination status or the COVID-19 risk level of the sport. Indoors includes locker rooms, weight rooms, and other indoor spaces.
  - Athletes must wear a mask indoors during practice, games, and competitions, whether they are actively playing or watching from the sidelines.
  - Coaches must wear masks indoors even when they are engaged in intense physical activity.
  - Masks can be removed when in the water for showers and indoor water sports, like swimming, water polo or diving. Masks must be worn when not in the water.
  - Masks can be removed temporarily to eat or drink, by a gymnast while performing/practicing on an apparatus, and by a cheerleader who is actively performing/practicing routines that involve tumbling, stunting, or flying, but must be put back on immediately afterwards. When people are actively eating or drinking, they should be encouraged to stay 6 feet away from others.
  - During wrestling contact, a face mask could become a choking hazard and is discouraged unless an adult coach or official is closely monitoring for safety purposes.
- Masks are recommended in outdoor crowded spaces and places, including among spectators where distancing is not practical or possible.
- It is a good idea to bring more than one mask in case a mask gets wet or dirty. Any face mask that becomes saturated with sweat should be changed immediately.
- To learn more visit [ph.lacounty.gov/masks](https://ph.lacounty.gov/masks) for details.

### Routine COVID-19 screening testing requirements and recommendations vary by risk of COVID-19 transmission.

**Required screening testing:** Screening testing requirements for athletes, coaches, support staff, and volunteers vary according to age and vaccination status, the COVID-19 exposure risk level of the sport, and whether the sport takes place indoors or outdoors. See the table below for details. The results of tests performed at school can be used for youth sports.

**COVID-19 exposure risk level is determined by the amount of physical contact between players.**

- **High risk sports:** basketball, boxing, football, ice hockey, boys' lacrosse, martial arts, roller derby, rowing/crew, soccer, water polo, and wrestling.
- **Moderate risk sports:** baseball, cheerleading, dance, dodgeball, field hockey, flag football, kickball, girls' lacrosse, softball, volleyball, squash and doubles tennis, badminton, and pickleball.
- **Low risk sports:** Archery, biking, bocce, bowling, cross country, curling, disc golf, equestrian, golf, gymnastics, ice and roller skating, physical training (like yoga, Zumba, tai chi), running, skiing and snowboarding, swimming and diving, singles tennis, track and field, and hiking.

# COVID-19 Prevention at Youth Sports

<b>Screening Testing Requirements*</b> <b>for athletes, coaches, support staff, and volunteers**</b> <i>If a test is done, the result must be negative in order to participate</i>				
		High and Moderate Risk Sports		Low Risk Sport
		Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor or Outdoor
Fully Vaccinated (Against COVID-19)	All ages	No	No	No
Not Fully Vaccinated	Age 12 and over	Weekly testing is <u>required</u> <i>Twice weekly testing is recommended</i>	Weekly testing is <u>required</u>	No
	Age 11 and under		No	

\*People who have recovered from COVID-19 and no longer have symptoms do not need to test until 90 days have passed since the first day of their symptoms. If they never got symptoms, they do not need to test until 90 days after the date the first positive test was collected.

\*\* Support staff/volunteers whose role or functions do not include any direct interaction with athletes, coaches, or other staff (e.g., lending administrative support to the team or league but not working directly with youth or other team members) are exempt from the testing requirements. Occasional volunteers who have very limited direct interaction with athletes, coaches, or other staff (e.g., a volunteer referee or umpire who officiates only once or twice during the season) are not required to perform weekly screening testing, but must provide proof of full vaccination or proof of a negative test performed within the 3 days prior to their volunteer activity.

## Recommended screening testing

It is recommended that all unvaccinated participants in any youth sports be screened weekly when communities are experiencing high rates of transmission, where possible. The results of tests performed at school can be used.

Additional screening recommendations for unvaccinated players under the age of 12 years who participate in moderate-and high-risk outdoor sports include:

- If they are regularly transported via buses or vans, weekly testing is recommended.
- If they are participating in a multi-county, multi-day competition of a high or medium risk outdoor sport, a test within 3 days of their first game is recommended.

## The risk for COVID-19 transmission extends beyond practice and games.

- To further reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, programs may take measures to reduce crowding and person-to-person contact, increase physical distancing, increase ventilation, promote frequent handwashing, and take extra precautions for team travel.
- Non-athletic team events, such as dinners or other social activities, should only happen if they can take place outdoors with distancing.



## COVID-19 Prevention at Youth Sports

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- Everyone can do their part to slow the spread COVID-19 by reducing their risk on and off the field. Learn more about how to reduce your risk and slow the spread of COVID-19 including which situations are riskier, at [ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk](https://ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk).

### Follow precautions for team travel and tournaments.

Staying within your community will be safer than participating on travel teams. Traveling to an area with more COVID-19 cases could increase the chance of transmission and spread. Talk to your child's sport program to find out about what safety measures they are taking. LAC DPH recommends the following safety measures for team travel:

- Masks should be worn at all times in shared vehicles with team members who are not from the same household. Windows should remain open, including in carpool vehicles, if it is safe to do so.
- When travelling overnight:
  - It is recommended that team members from different households sleep in separate rooms
  - Masks should be worn when visiting other team members' hotel rooms.
  - Masks should not be worn while sleeping.
- Socializing with the other team is strongly discouraged.
- For travel outside Los Angeles County, check the LAC DPH [Travel Advisory and Guidance](#).