



Oregon School Activities Association

25200 SW Parkway Avenue, Suite 1
Wilsonville, OR 97070
503.682.6722 <http://www.osaa.org>



RETURN TO PARTICIPATION FOLLOWING INFECTION WITH COVID-19

Updated 09/24/21

The OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) has reviewed recommendations from multiple medical and sporting societies and national and local medical centers, including AAP, ACC, AMSSM, NFHS, Providence, OHSU, and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

We propose the following revised guidance to assist in the evaluation of high school athletes wishing to return to sports activity following a COVID-19 infection. **The earlier recommendations were more conservative at a time when less was known about COVID-19 effects on the hearts of athletic individuals.**

Of greatest concern are cardiac-related symptoms including but not limited to chest pain, shortness of breath (either at rest or with exertion), fatigue, palpitations, syncope (passing out) or near-syncope. Symptoms such as loss of taste or smell are not the focus of this guidance. **Any individual who experiences cardiac-related symptoms during return to activity or other participation must be pulled from activity immediately and re-evaluated by their primary care provider.**

1. Individuals who had asymptomatic or **mild** COVID-19 illness (gastrointestinal symptoms, loss of taste/smell, or common cold-like symptoms with no fever) should be permitted to return to activity without additional formal medical evaluation.

Those who remained **asymptomatic** or who experienced only **mild illness** should rest for a minimum of three days from date of first symptoms or positive test, and recover from symptoms. They may then advance back to activity as tolerated over a minimum of three days.

2. Those who experienced **moderate** (fever greater than 100.4 degrees F, chills, flu-like symptoms for two or more days) or **severe** COVID-19 illness (i.e., prolonged symptoms or hospitalized) should present written clearance from their primary care provider (PCP) or cardiologist prior to return to sports activity. These individuals should rest and improve a minimum of five days after symptom onset and their moderate symptoms resolve. Then, their PCP or cardiologist may consider the following evaluation based on age and symptoms, such as:
 - A. ECG, troponin, echocardiogram
 - B. Additional imaging, evaluation, and cardiology referral if indicated
 - C. Once cleared, they may begin a graduated return to play progression.

Athletes with remote infections and moderate symptoms more than three months ago who never received a cardiac evaluation but have returned to full activity without symptoms do not need additional cardiac testing.

Sample Graduated Return to Play (RTP) for athletes recovering from moderate or severe COVID-19 illness

The following is a sample activity progression for athletes recovering from moderate or severe COVID-19 illness. The athlete should be monitored for the development of chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, palpitations, lightheadedness, pre-syncope, or syncope. If these symptoms develop, the athlete **must be pulled from activity immediately** and be referred back to the evaluating provider.

1. **Stage 1: (1-2 Days) Light Activity** (Walking, Jogging, Stationary Bike) for 15 minutes or less at intensity no greater than 70% of maximum heart rate. NO resistance training.
2. **Stage 2: (1-2 Days) Add simple movement activities** (such as running drills) for 30 minutes or less at intensity no greater than 80% of maximum heart rate.
3. **Stage 3: (1-2 Days) Progress to more complex training** for 45 minutes or less at intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate. May add light resistance training.
4. **Stage 4: (1-2 Days) Normal Training Activity** for 60 minutes or less at intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate.
5. **Stage 5: Return to full activity.**

References:

RTP Procedure adapted from Elliott N, et al. Infographic. British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2020.

Cardiopulmonary Considerations for High School Student-Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Update to the NFHS-AMSSM Guidance Statement. Accessed on September 15, 2021 at: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4860120/updated-2021-nfhs-amssm-guidance-statement-on-cardiac-considerations-with-covid-19-final-8-17-21.pdf>