

COVID-19 RETURN TO YOUTH SPORT GUIDELINES



The following recommendations are based on a collaborative effort by experts in childhood sports medicine from representative regions around the United States. Keep in mind that some recommendations may vary by geographic region, and are subject to change on a regular basis. As our understanding of the disease evolves, our recommendations may evolve as well - so check back periodically.

SYMPTOMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

All athletes should confirm the absence of any of the following COVID-19 related symptoms before participation in sports: **fever, cough, shaking chills, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, discoloration of the fingers or toes, pain in the extremities**



Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not be allowed to return to sports for at least 14 days, including at least 7 days without symptoms. Written medical clearance is recommended prior to return to play

A medical evaluation should be considered for those with close contacts who have tested positive for COVID-19, as well as for those with risk factors such as asthma, diabetes, cardiac disease, or a compromised immune system.



Cardiopulmonary complications of COVID-19 may present up to 6-8 weeks or more post-infection and can be associated with the following symptoms:



- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; chest pain, pressure or tightness; palpitations, racing heart; dizziness, passing out or seizure.**
- The presence of any of these symptoms and a previous history of known or potential COVID-19 illness warrants a thorough cardiopulmonary evaluation

SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS



We recommend symptom screening at least weekly via a convenient phone app or online platform accessible by coaches and parents, acknowledging symptom screening alone is not sufficient to mitigate infection and must be combined with other risk reduction strategies.

It is important to acknowledge the potential effect of peer pressure and negative social implications for children who report symptoms or have COVID-19, and we emphasize the need to develop and reinforce a culture that prioritizes the health of teammates and family members above sport.



RISK STRATIFICATION AND RISK REDUCTION

Different sports have different levels of risk of transmission that must be taken into account when planning for returning.

High Risk Sports

Involve close, sustained contact between participants and lack of significant protective barriers.

Examples: wrestling, football, rugby, basketball, lacrosse, competitive cheer, water polo



Moderate Risk Sports

Involve close, sustained contact but also can take advantage of protective equipment and separation among players

Examples: volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, gymnastics, ice hockey, field hockey



Lower Risk Sports

Involve close, sustained contact but also can take advantage of protective equipment and separation among players

Examples: individual track and field events, individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, alpine skiing, sideline cheer, cross country running



Risk reduction tactics should include:

- Physical distancing >6 feet when possible
- Face mask use while on sidelines or not actively participating
- Hand hygiene
- No sharing of water bottles or equipment
- Regular sanitation of facilities and equipment, training in smaller groups
- Limiting travel for competition



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Children's Health System

SCOTTISH RITE

FOR CHILDREN

Created by COVID & Youth Sports Taskforce

Additional information and resources can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y4hawvrn>

Rady Children's Hospital

Stanford Children's Health

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford

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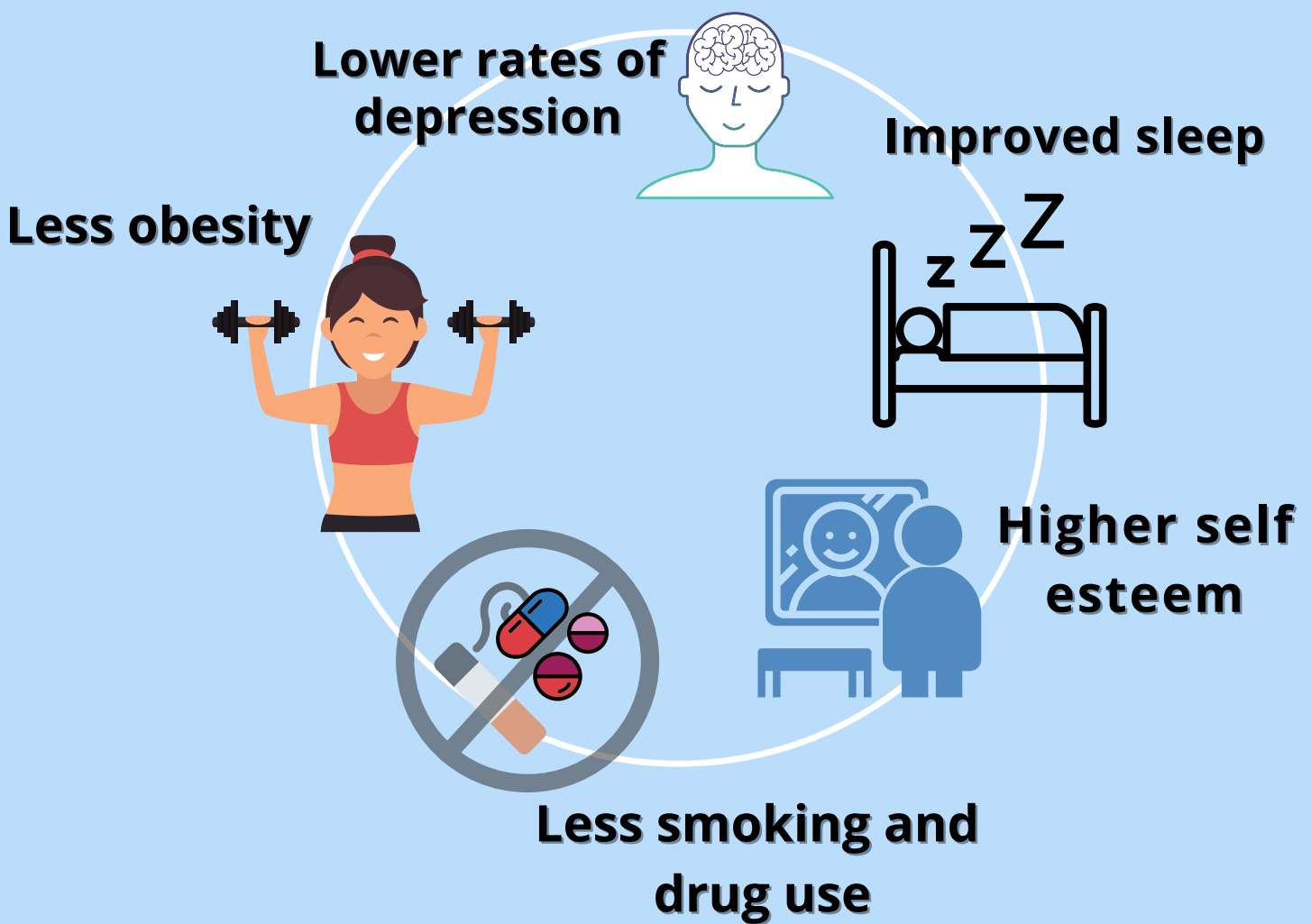
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BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are clear benefits of physical activity and sports for our youth. In addition to physical health, these include:

Social Interaction, Leadership, Commitment to a Team, Responsibility, and Discipline

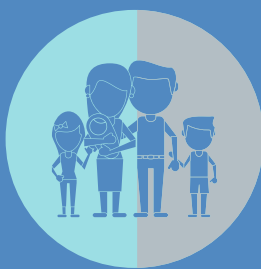
Youth involved in regular physical activity are shown to have:



PARENT DECISION-MAKING

Ultimately, **parents should be empowered** to make decisions that are right for their children and their family. Considerations for parents enrolling their children in youth sports should include:

- their own child's risk of **illness** as well as the risk to other household members
- the **type of sport** and level of close physical interaction required
- opportunities to **physically distance** during training
- the use of shared equipment, size of team, league rules and regulations, and travel requirements.



RETURNING SAFELY AND AVOIDING OVERUSE INJURIES/TRAINING ERRORS

There is a potential increased risk of overuse injury risk during the transition back to sport after the prolonged break due to COVID-19 limitations. Recommendations to decrease this risk include:



Periodization of training throughout the year (that is, taking an off-season) and discouragement of year-round play



Implementing preventative training programs requiring multiple types of exercise such as strength, balance, agility, flexibility, and plyometrics



Encouraging recovery/rest days of at least one day per week



Adjust fuel and hydration as needed based on training and climate



Prioritizing sleep can't be emphasized enough as a measure to reduce risk of injury and illness

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