



# Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth Sports

This guidance document outlines the practical application of prevention strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among sports activities. This is a sports-specific supplement to the [Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth and Student Programming \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/socialdistance.pdf>).

Please ensure that your program is following the parameters outlined in the above referenced document, including the development of a program-specific plan. In general, the guidance document includes recommendations for:

- Following social distancing.
- Masking when appropriate.
- Encouraging and enforcing norms of health etiquette.
- Promoting health checks and screening of participants and staff/volunteers.
- Enforcing stay-at-home when sick expectations.
- Ensuring policies are considerate of staff, volunteers, and participants at highest risk of complications.
  - [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html)
- Following routine disinfection of high-touch items (balls, racquets, bats, other equipment).

In support of the National Youth Sports Strategy aims, we recognize that sports provide opportunities for youth to develop or maintain fitness, specific skills, mental well-being, and social-emotional health. We want to support youth in engaging in sports, but we want to do it in a way that will keep them safe. Below are specific parameters to support youth sports in a way that will minimize transmission of COVID-19.

## Programs involving youth sports

If your program involves sports as either an activity within a program or as the focus of the program itself, please use the following guidance. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is supportive of the following parameters for youth sports:

- Within the program, create consistent pods of the same staff, volunteers, and participants with a **maximum number of 10 people in each pod**.
- Make sure you're in compliance with Safe Sport mandates (federal law).
- Host practices outdoors as much as possible.
- Remind parents or caregivers that they should not attend practices. If necessary for them to be at practices, ensure that proper social distancing is maintained between parents or caregivers.
- For sports activities that are part of a child care, school, or day camp program:
  - Keep any "play" or interaction between players contactless.
    - For example: Kick a soccer ball back and forth, but do not allow for training around stealing the ball where contact between players may occur.
  - Do not have intermixing between groups.
- For organized recreation or club sports:
  - Focus on skill development.
  - Keep any "play" or interaction between players contactless.
  - Do not have intermixing between groups.
  - Do not participate in games or tournaments, even if these events are out of state where youth sports games/tournaments are supported.
- Discourage sharing of equipment as much as possible. If sharing has to occur, consider the equipment and type of use and consider cleaning equipment between each use.
- Avoid using locker rooms and facility showers.
  - If facility showers need to be used, only allow shower and locker room use if there are partitions or else place signage to maintain proper physical distancing of 6 feet.
- Follow the outlined ratios for participants per field:
  - One team/sport per field/rink/court at any time.
  - Football/soccer field (approx. 57,600 sq. ft.) – no more than four pods of ≤ 10.
  - Baseball field (40,000+ sq. ft.) – no more than three pods of ≤ 10.
  - Ice rink (approx. 17,000 sq. ft.) – no more than two pods of ≤ 10.
  - Basketball/volleyball court (4,700 sq. ft.) – no more than one pod of ≤ 10.
  - Adhere to facility or field specific guidelines for COVID-19.

## Future steps

Future steps may include allowing for larger gatherings and/or flexibility around intermixing between teams and will likely have different guidance based on the type of contact that normally occurs in the sport. In general, MDH will be increasing parameters based on the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Minnesota.

### Resources

[The National Youth Sports Strategy \(PDF\) \(https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/National\\_Youth\\_Sports\\_Strategy.pdf\)](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-10/National_Youth_Sports_Strategy.pdf)

[Project Play Resources \(https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/coronavirus-and-youth-sports\)](https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/coronavirus-and-youth-sports)

[Youth Programs and Camps During the COVID-19 Pandemic \(PDF\) \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Camps-Decision-Tree.pdf\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Camps-Decision-Tree.pdf)

## For more information

Visit [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html\)](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html), or call the COVID-19 hotline at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903.



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](https://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
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Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

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