Lurie Children's Division of Orthopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine
“Best Practices” for returning to sports and play
during the COVID-19 pandemic

60 minutes of physical activity per day is encouraged
• Individual activity benefits: cardiovascular health, strength, body composition, immune system strengthening and psychological benefits
• Team sports additional benefits: socialization and structured routine provide improved mental health and behavioral development

Team sport participation has increased risks of COVID-19 transmission over individual sport participation
• Risk increases with increased number of players, decreased spacing, increased frequency and duration of player contact.
• Risk increases with indoor participation, decreased size and ventilation of facility
• Risk increases with use of shared equipment, facilities and common surfaces for both team and individual sports.

Risk/benefit analysis of team sport participation should be evaluated on an individual child/family basis
• High risk medical problems for consideration: cancer, obesity, heart condition, sickle cell disease, type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, COPD, immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant, medically complex condition, neurologic problem, genetic problem, or metabolic problem, moderate-to-severe asthma
• Lowest Risk activity: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members; attending virtually coach-led practices through a video conference platform
• Increasing Risk activity: Team-based practice
• More Risk: Within-team competition
• Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area
• Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas

Appropriate masking, hand hygiene, and social distancing precautions should be maintained
• Face coverings should be worn by coaches, officials, spectators, and volunteers
• All athletes should wear a cloth face mask when on the sidelines, but masks may be removed during vigorous exercise or high intensity activity
• Maintain social distancing of player/participants (6 feet or greater when able)
• Daily symptom monitoring should be performed, with no play if symptomatic
• Two-week quarantine and clearance by physician for return to play for participants or participants with household contacts who test positive for COVID-19

Resources:
• Youth Sports Participation During COVID-19: A Safety Checklist
• Youth Sports and COVID-19: Understanding Risks
• AAP COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports
• CDC Considerations for Youth Sports
• Why Face Coverings are Needed in Youth Sports During COVID-19