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**Government
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Office for Recreation,
Sport and Racing

SA SPORT MEDICINE ASSOCIATION

***SPORT AND ACTIVITY
COVID GUIDELINE FOR
THE SA COMMUNITY***

SASMA has identified the need for specific sport and activity COVID-Safe information to support physical activity and wellbeing across the community. The Sport and Activity COVID Guideline accompanied with the communication material, Expert Panel Seminar and Information line will advise and assist the community across the State whether this be for training, recreation, fitness or competition.

SASMA acknowledges that sport and activity plays an important role within the community and it is our collective community action and responsibility in managing our COVID environment that will drive how we can participate. The guideline and practical communication information will support, enable and facilitate the positive health benefits, social engagement and community connection that sport, exercise and activity plays across metropolitan and regional SA.

This campaign will support the sporting and active community to make positive decisions around continued physical activity. Whilst there is a range of information available, our aim is to provide ready to use, practical and visual information for everyday people on the ground engaging in sport and activity in a range of settings. We also aim to raise awareness around exercise boosting immunity and mental health wellbeing.

Two aims:

1. Provide guidelines on returning to sport and activity post COVID for players/participants/officials and medical and allied health professionals
2. To provide clear, concise, practical and easy to follow operational guidelines and advice on managing COVID in a sporting or active environment

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RETURNING TO SPORT AND ACTIVITY SAFELY AFTER COVID-19 IS GOOD FOR YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED

Understanding the risks; COVID-19 is unique.

The risks of long-term health issues from COVID are relatively low but higher than most other viruses. Your risk of developing long term symptoms from COVID is higher if you experienced more severe symptoms during your illness, (e.g. severe shortness of breath, cardiac symptoms, requirement for hospitalisation or ventilation).

The level of deconditioning from COVID is expected following an isolation period, including, loss of strength, balance and fitness affecting your return to sport and activity.

The most common long-term issue is fatigue, but shortness of breath, chest pain, diarrhoea and other symptoms are also common. For some people, joint aches and pains can also be associated with COVID recovery symptoms as inflammation occurs across your body.

The risks from COVID on your health depends on the degree of infection and pre-existing comorbidities (asthma, diabetes, obesity). Most symptoms settle by about 3 months, although there is a wide range of other symptoms and every individual reacts differently. Any symptoms that persist beyond 3 months cannot be underestimated and should be investigated by a GP or Sports Physician.

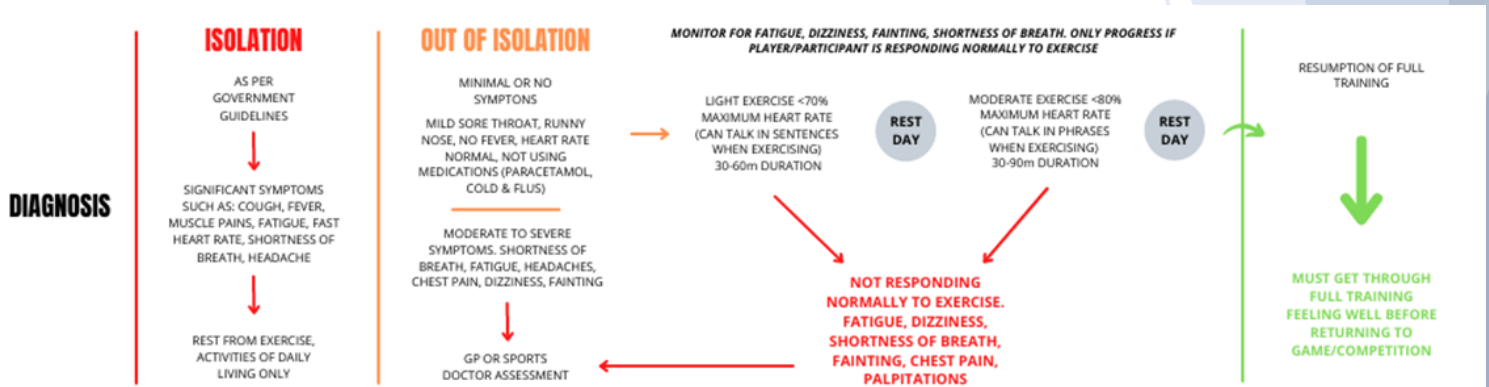
1. Before returning to sport or exercise; you need to be symptom-free below the neck.

You must not have any of these symptoms;

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Excessive fatigue
- Fevers

Delay the onset of exercise until you have none of these symptoms. If unsure, see your GP before you start sport or exercise.

2. Planning your return to sport and exercise;



3. Close contacts or classroom contacts – what can you do?

- In the first instance you must follow SA Police and SA Health directions. As restrictions lift there will be changes to remain aware of.
- In situations when participating in team activities, continuing the activity with others is not permitted (e.g. you are isolating at home), you can exercise in a safe way providing you have no symptoms. This might include exercising outdoors, with no sharing of equipment (e.g. balls, bats, bikes) and no sharing of transport (if you are isolating, you cannot drive in a car with other people). Think about jump-rope, walking (if you can leave your property) or doing step-ups. You can find examples that suit your sport or try one of these below (page 4).

4. School Sport (not PE lessons) and Club Sport – what can I do?

- In the first instance you must follow SA Police and SA Health directions. As restrictions lift there will be changes to remain aware of.
- Sport is important for mental and physical wellbeing and should be encouraged when safe.
- SASMA medical experts recognise that SA Health guidelines (released March 7 2022) suggest that parents and students make decisions about playing sport according to their own individual circumstances.
- We have developed a risk matrix (page 10) to help you understand your own individual COVID risks and we suggest that those who fall into the high risk category consider staying home from sport (or selecting a less risky sport/activity if possible) until they fall into a lower risk category.
- Please note that SA Health do not consider extra-curricular school sport any differently to club sport or organised recreational activity.
- The risk matrix (page 10) applies equally to all sport for anyone who is a current classroom contact.

Some helpful links for staying active at home;

- <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/be+active/ways+to+be+active/be+active+at+home>
- <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/nhw/home/news/stay-active-in-lockdown>
- <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/covid-19/staying-active-at-home-during-covid-19>
- <https://campaustralia.com.au/blog/8-ways-to-exercise-with-kids-when-lockdown-restrictions-are-relaxing>
- <https://www.activekids.com/basketball/articles/7-conditioning-drills-for-basketball-players>
- <https://www.heraldsun.com.au/sport/netball/athome-netball-drills-with-paige-hadley-training-with-the-stars/video/6d0b03b7dcb07a744ce58c59c2730483>
- <https://touchfootball.com.au/news/2020/04/27/5-drills-you-can-do-at-home/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long should I rest for?

- If you have symptoms below the neck (cough, chest pain, fever, shortness of breath), then you should rest until the symptoms resolve, and you should see a doctor before returning to training/sport.
- If you have mild symptoms (runny nose, mild headache, above the neck) and are NOT taking medications (paracetamol, cold and flus etc), you should start by reducing the intensity of your exercise to 70% maximum heart rate, and monitor your symptoms. If you feel good, you can increase your level of activity after your rest day (every second day) until you feel you are on track and are back to how you were before COVID.
- Remember to clean your hands regularly, carry sanitiser and wipe any surfaces or equipment you touch and use.

Can I exercise while in isolation?

- If your symptoms were mild, and they have resolved, then yes, you can exercise while still in isolation. Make sure to monitor your symptoms (keep an exercise diary so that you can track your progress and gradually increase time and intensity of training. You can monitor your “rate of perceived exertion” RPE), monitoring that you do not get worse with exercise.

When will I feel well enough to return to sport?

- It can take several months to feel back to normal after your recovery from the COVID-19 infection and the effect on fitness can range enormously. Some people snap back and others can struggle for weeks, months or longer. “Long COVID” is described as people experiencing symptoms for over 12 weeks and we do not know why this occurs as yet. Remember to consult with your GP and let your coach/teacher/family know how you are feeling.

How long until I can go back to my sporting club?

- Follow current government guidelines (remember they are being updated regularly)
- Remember each sporting code also has guidelines to follow which can be found on their website.
- Clubs should put policies in place to assist families and participants, minimising risks, be responsive to questions and encourage safe activity
- Outdoor sport and well ventilated indoor courts are better options
- Exercise rooms and rental spaces in councils and commercial areas need to follow good ventilation, regular cleaning, wiping of mats and equipment and density limits

What sport can I play as a classroom contact?

- Outdoor activity with no equipment
- School team sport
- Indoor basketball
- Outdoor cricket

Do I need to see a doctor before returning to play?

- If you had severe symptoms or your symptoms get worse during the gradual return to play/exercise and you are concerned, it is a good idea to make an appointment with a doctor.

Individual sports and team sports/activity, indoor and outdoor environments

- Be mindful of large groups and if you can train in smaller groups or individually. You have less risk in an individual sport. Outdoors is always best and if indoors maximise ventilation and follow COVID-Safe guidelines (washing hands, masks etc)

Resources and references;

- *Published research (British Journal of Sports Medicine) regarding return to sport post covid-19;*
<https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/54/19/1174>
- *Sport Australia Toolkit to guide return of community sport;*
https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media_centre/news/toolkit-launched-to-help-guide-return-of-community-sport
- *SANFL Return to Play support;* <https://sanfl.com.au/returntoplay/>

SPORTS AND ACTIVITY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS, SCHOOLS, ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS – HELPFUL TIPS TO FOLLOW AT YOUR VENUE

Everyone in your club, school, and community activity is responsible for making a COVID-19 Safe environment so all can enjoy sport and activity.

If you are feeling unwell, stay at home - protect your team/class mates to ensure your team can continue to play.

COVID is highly contagious and therefore it can infect a team/class and impact your entire season – stay home if you're sick, get tested and do not take risks.

IMPORTANT Hand Hygiene: suitable alcohol based wipes and hand washing with antibacterial soap is readily available with hand basins being cleaned regularly.

HAND HYGIENE TO BE PERFORMED BY ALL:

- Before and after touching common surfaces
- Before and after touching a person
- Avoid touching your face and mouth
- Dry your hands with paper towel only
- Before and after putting disposable gloves on and off (EXTRA information for sports trainers, first aid personnel, anyone hands on)

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR ALL AND ESPECIALLY PLAYERS/PARTICIPANTS/PARENTS:

- Cover a cough or sneeze – cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Avoid spitting
- Avoid close contact where possible – no hand shaking, hugging
- Arrive ready for the activity (taped if you can) and shower and change at home is preferable
- Have your drink bottle full and ready and do not share food
- When you get home wash your sporting uniform as soon as possible and shower
- We encourage you have your own hand sanitizer, alcohol based wipes and surface spray in the car

CLUB ROOMS:

- Ensure adequate hand hygiene stations are available – alcohol based wipes to be placed at entry and exit points
- Ensure disposable surgical face masks for athletes / participants and officials are available
- Encourage good practice around wearing surgical face masks i.e.: after single dispose in a bin, do not place on a table where germs could spread

COMMON AREAS:

- Cleaned on a regular basis
- Hard surfaces cleaned with appropriated alcohol based wipes and surface spray, before and after use
- Canteens to follow regular cleaning guidelines

Make sure you have bins for used masks, paper towels, disposable cleaning items

EQUIPMENT AND INDOOR COURTS:

- Indoor venues and equipment will require regular and ongoing cleaning
- Goal posts and padding
- Mats
- Gym equipment – wipe after each use with alcohol based wipes
- Balls
- Basketball – wiping court floor, single use wipes, fabric towels not recommended
- Netball – swapping bibs, need to be washed after use or use surface spray during swapping in a game (we encourage two sets of bibs where possible OR use surface spray during the training session/game when changing positions and bibs)
- No sharing of whistles
- Use your own pen when scoring / wipe down iPad and scoring buttons and timers
- Wipe down first aid kits
- Clean eskys used for ice and drinks
- No sharing of water bottles
- No sharing of food
- No sharing of towels
- Anything that is regularly touched should be wiped down (e.g.: team sports bag, goal post covers)

(Examples of cleaning products: alcohol-based wipes or surface spray - single use products)

TREATMENT AREAS / FIRST AID ROOM:

All surfaces to be cleaned with appropriate alcohol based wipes and surface spray if appropriate, before and after each individual use

- Chairs
- Treatment Tables
- Bench tops
- Sinks
- Mats
- Balls
- Covers

TREATMENT AREAS:

- Maximum density, 1 person per 1.5mtr, limit number of people in the space (ask people to wait outside)
- Treat / manage participants in open, well ventilated or outdoor areas where possible
- Disposable sheets can be used if needed and need to be discarded after each use. However, this can be expensive and wiping surfaces is generally sufficient

FACE MASKS:

- Sports Trainer to wear a surgical mask when treating / managing a players / participants (especially when people are breathing heavily from physical exercise)
- Player / participant also to wear a surgical mask, we recognise during activity this may not be possible (important to wear a mask in treatment areas)
- Follow mask brand guidelines on length of use – e.g. 2-3 hours, discard mask if it is soiled or has been touched multiple times – designed for single use
- Cloth masks are not recommended in high risk environments (e.g.: where there are lots of people in a small area)

TRAINING AND GAME DAYS: COACHING TIPS AND CHANGE ROOM PROTOCOL:

- Coaches should avoid keeping large groups in enclosed areas (change rooms, club rooms- go outside) and should keep their pre and post-game talks to a minimum (feedback can be given electronically)
- Aim to have all team meetings outside or online
- Coaches and Team managers should keep a close eye on players/participants for symptoms and keep in regular contact with parents and carer's
- Clubs/Schools should have well laid out areas outside for club registration days, uniform pick up and coordinate separate times for teams to 'get in and get out' of the area within reason
- All officials should lead by example to ensure their club can continue operating throughout the season
- Ensure adequate hand hygiene stations are available – hand sanitizer to be placed at entry and exit points
- Ensure disposable surgical face masks for athletes / participants and officials are available
- Clean all surfaces – treatment tables, chairs, bench tops and sinks, alcohol based wipes and surface spray
- Disposable gloves need to be available in a variety of sizes
- Educate players / participants / officials on hand hygiene – upon entering and leaving any indoor area including change rooms treatment area, wearing a mask when being taped / treated
- Wear a face mask indoors and when taping or treating players / athletes, and outdoors when within 1.5mtrs of another person
- Hand hygiene before and after each person – keep some hand sanitizer in your pocket / bum bag
- Clean surfaces after each use, whatever you touch needs to be wiped down with a alcohol based wipes and surface spray e.g., first aid kits
- Make sure you have some alcohol-based wipes or surface spray with you for easy use and as a visual reminder

COVID SPORT AND ACTIVITY COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

PRACTICAL COVID TIPS FOR SPORT AND ACTIVITY

Everyone in your club, school, and community activity is responsible for making a COVID-Safe environment so all can enjoy sport and activity.



WHAT YOUR CLUB/SCHOOL/ACTIVITY SPACE CAN DO...

- CLEAN COMMON AREAS**
HARD SURFACES CLEANED WITH APPROPRIATE ALCOHOL BASED WIPES AND SURFACE SPRAY, BEFORE AND AFTER USE
- HAND WASHING**
HAND SANITISER AVAILABLE AT ENTRY/EXIT
HAND WASHING FACILITIES AVAILABLE
USE PAPER TOWELS
- ENSURE DISPOSABLE MASKS ARE AVAILABLE**
ENSURE BINS ARE AVAILABLE
- CLEAN EQUIPMENT WITH WIPES/SPRAY**
- NO SHARING OF OTHER EQUIPMENT**
- COACHES/MANAGERS**
MINIMISE INDOOR MEETINGS
HEAD OUTDOORS OR USE TECHNOLOGY

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PRACTICAL COVID TIPS FOR SPORT AND ACTIVITY

Everyone in your club, school, and community activity is responsible for making a COVID-Safe environment so all can enjoy sport and activity.



FOR SPORTS TRAINERS AND FIRST AID PERSONNEL...

- WEAR A MASK AND GLOVES WHEN TREATING / TAPING**
ALSO ASK YOUR PLAYER TO WEAR A MASK
- MINIMISE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN TREATMENT ROOM**
TREAT OUTSIDE WHEN YOU CAN
- ALWAYS CLEAN YOUR EQUIPMENT**
MESSAGE TABLES
YOUR EQUIPMENT
GENERAL AREA
- REGULARLY WASH AND SANITISE YOUR HANDS**

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PRACTICAL COVID TIPS FOR SPORT AND ACTIVITY

Everyone in your club, school, and community activity is responsible for making a COVID-Safe environment so all can enjoy sport and activity.



WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- FEELING UNWELL? STAY AT HOME.**
DON'T RISK YOUR MATES OR YOUR SEASON!
- ARRIVE READY**
BRING BOTTLE FULL GET DRESSED AT HOME
TAPE AT HOME IF POSSIBLE
- ENSURE YOU HAVE A MASK TO WEAR**
- HAND WASHING**
BEFORE/AFTER TOUCHING COMMON SURFACES
BEFORE/AFTER TOUCHING A PERSON
AVOID TOUCHING FACE AND MOUTH
- AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WHEN POSSIBLE**
NO HAND SHAKING
NO HUGGING
- AVOID SPITTING**
COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE

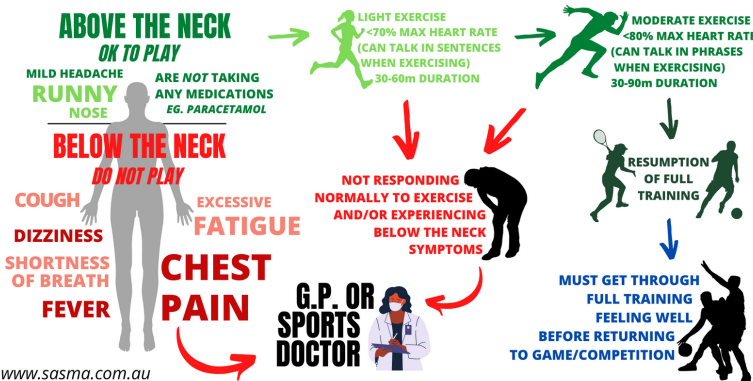
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RETURNING TO SPORT POST COVID

Returning to sport and activity after COVID-19 is good for your physical and mental health and should be encouraged.



OUT OF ISOLATION? - CHECK SYMPTOMS BELOW



www.sasma.com.au

UNDERSTANDING CLASSROOM CONTACTS AND IMPACT ON SPORT AND ACTIVITY



Sport is important for mental and physical wellbeing and should be encouraged when safe. SASMA medical experts recognise that SA Health guidelines (released March 7 2022) suggest that parents and students make decisions about playing sport according to their own individual circumstances. We have developed this risk matrix to help you understand your own individual COVID risks and we suggest that those who fall into the high risk category consider staying home from sport (or selecting a less risky sport/activity if possible) until they fall into a lower risk category. Please note that SA Health do not consider extra-curricular school sport any differently to club sport or organised recreational activity. This risk matrix applies equally to all sport for anyone who is a current classroom contact.

IDENTIFY THE NATURE OF YOUR SPORT/ACTIVITY

| INDOOR SPORT/ACTIVITY | SHARED EQUIPMENT BATS, BALLS AS WELL AS TRANSPORT (TEAM BUS) | OUTDOOR SPORT/ACTIVITY |
|---|--|---|
| CHILD HAS SYMPTOMS EG. COUGH, FEVER, RUNNY NOSE, ACHES | | |
| DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY SPORT/ACTIVITY | | |
| CHILD OR A CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER HAS AN EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITION THAT INCREASES THEIR COVID RISK | | |
| HIGH RISK - CONSIDER AVOIDING SPORT UNTIL YOUR RISK IS LOWER | | MEDIUM RISK - CONSIDER APPLYING COVID-SAFE MEASURES AND RETURNING TO SPORT/ACTIVITY |
| CHILD IS UNVACCINATED | | |
| HIGH RISK - CONSIDER AVOIDING SPORT UNTIL YOUR RISK IS LOWER | | MEDIUM RISK - CONSIDER APPLYING COVID-SAFE MEASURES AND RETURNING TO SPORT/ACTIVITY |
| CLASSROOM HAS MORE THAN 5 CURRENTLY ACTIVE CASES | | |
| HIGH RISK - CONSIDER AVOIDING SPORT UNTIL YOUR RISK IS LOWER | | |
| CLASSROOM HAS LESS THAN 5 CURRENTLY ACTIVE CASES | | |
| MEDIUM RISK - CONSIDER APPLYING COVID-SAFE MEASURES AND RETURNING TO SPORT/ACTIVITY | | |

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It is recommended that all officials (coaches, sports trainers, scorers, teachers, managers etc.) undertake the online COVID-19 Infection Control Training at www.covid-19training.gov.au, with additional e-learning modules on the Principles of Infection Prevention and Control available from The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

www.covid-19training.gov.au

www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/infection-prevention-and-control/infection-prevention-and-control-elearning-modules

- Follow your organisation's COVID-19 Safe Plan and Government requirements e.g. your COVID Marshal, noting these are subject to change
- Remember different sports have different regulations in relation to Covid as do State jurisdictions
- Follow all hygiene and social distancing protocols
- Avoid non-essential manual therapy, e.g. massage
- Plan gatherings to minimise potential spread (good ventilation, outdoor areas are best or electronically)

AIS and Sport Australia useful links:

- <https://www.orsr.sa.gov.au/home/covid-19-support>
- <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/covid-safe-sport#sa>

WITH CHANGING HEALTH RESTRICTIONS, THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REVIEWED AND UPDATED FROM TIME TO TIME. REGARDLESS OF CHANGING UPDATES IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE COMMON SENSE AS THESE TIPS WILL SUPPORT A SAFE SPORTING AND ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT IN 2022.

