

## Athlete's Return to Sport After COVID-19 Infection

After COVID-19 infection, your student-athlete's health-care provider will help determine when it is safe to begin a graduated return to sport progression based on their medical history, symptoms, severity of illness and previous level of activity. The *PROVIDER CLEARANCE POST COVID -19 INFECTION FOR JEFFCO ATHLETES* must be completed and delivered to school athletic trainer prior to beginning Return to Sport progression.

A graduated return to sport progression will increase your athlete's activity level over the course of several days and allow the athletic trainer to monitor any lingering symptoms of COVID-19 infection. While the vast majority of adolescence afflicted with the coronavirus have mild to no symptoms, there is emerging medical research and concern that the infection can cause direct injury or inflammation to the heart, lungs, kidneys and the inflammatory system. Myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) can lead to arrhythmia, cardiac arrest and death, especially in a person who doesn't know they may have inflamed cardiac tissue and performs rigorous exercise.

Your athlete, under the supervision of school athletic trainer, may begin Phase 1 of the following Return to Sport progression once they are able to complete activities of daily living (i.e. walking around the house, dressing, daily hygiene tasks, etc.) without worsening of symptoms and has been cleared by a healthcare provider for exercise or sports activities. The athletic trainer will determine if it is safe for the athletic to advance to the next phase based on, but not limited to, O<sub>2</sub> saturation levels, heart rate and recovery, respiratory rate and recovery, athlete reported symptoms, positive conditioning trajectory, observable conditioning levels, and current best practice medical recommendations.

**Phasing Process for a Return to Sport:** Sessions must be at least **24 hours** apart. **Minimum** of one session per phase

- **Phase 1:** Light aerobic activity, 15-20 minutes, up to 70% max heart rate. (Activities may include brisk walking, light jogging or using a stationary bike. No strength training.
- **Phase 2:** Aerobic exercise for up to 30-45 minutes, up to 80% max heart rate. Simple movement activities such as running drills may be added to increase level of difficulty. No strength training.
- **Phase 3:** Sport specific training, for up to 60 minutes, up to 80% max heart rate. Strength training exercises may be added.
- **Phase 4:** Resume normal training activities and duration for at least one session.
- **Phase 5:** Return to competition with no restrictions.



***\*Athletes must successfully complete each of the progression phases above without development or worsening of symptoms, chest pain, chest tightness, palpitations, lightheadedness, pre-syncope or syncope prior to advancing to the next phase. If these symptoms develop patient will be referred back to the treating provider or a specialist. Low or concerning oxygen saturation levels will warrant additional medical evaluation and possible 911 call.***

### **References:**

Drezner J, Heinz W, Asif I et al. Cardiopulmonary Considerations for High School Student-Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: NFHS-AMSSM Guidance Statement. *Sage Journals*.

Childrens Mercy Kansas City, (Aug 7, 2020) Recommendations for a Safe Return to Sport and Physical Activity After COVID-19.

<https://www.childrensmercy.org/health-and-safety-resources/information-about-covid-19-novel-coronavirus/returning-to-community-activities/recommendations-for-a-safe-return-to-sport-and-physical-activity-after-covid-19/>

NCAA: Resocialization of Collegiate Sport: Developing Standards for Practice and Competition

NATA