 

October 6, 2020

Dear Physician:

The **Committee on Sports Medicine of the Iowa Medical Society, and the Iowa High School Athletic Association, have been partners for many years in protecting the health, wellness, and safety of interscholastic student-athletes**. Part of those efforts is our annual mailing to physicians. This is our twenty-third annual physician mailing.

**We hope the following information, and web links, will be of special interest** as you provide care for student-athletes in your area of the state, particularly in the face of the persistent COVID-19 pandemic. With the evolving presence of COVID-19 in our communities, we anticipate that future updates and communications may be needed to keep us all best informed as knowledge and guidance advances.

We encourage you to share this information with any Allied Health Professionals who may assist you in caring for young athletes.

1. [**COVID Considerations for Student Athletes**](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IMS-COVID-Sports-Medicine-Committee-Clearance-10.6.20.pdf)

While current understanding supports that the majority of children who contract COVID-19 will recover without incident, there are concerns related to the potential for side effects and long-term impacts, including possible cardiac involvement in some people who get COVID-19. Based on current evidence and knowledge at this time, the following guidance has been compiled to assist in determining when it should be considered safe for student-athletes to return to exercise and play:

* Timing of Return to Exercise: Return of a student-athlete to any form of exercise after a positive COVID-19 test should not take place for at least 14 days from the onset of symptoms, or date of positive test (whichever is earliest), with the athlete symptom-free for at least the last 7 days (In other words, this may be more than, but not less than 14 days).
* Graded Return to Exercise: It is recommended that all athletes undergo a return-to-play evaluation that includes a graded progression of cardiac exertion, and is monitored by a certified athletic trainer working under the supervision of a licensed physician, or by an on-site licensed medical provider, prior to participation in any organized practice or competition in their sport.
* **New or Ongoing Symptoms/Difficulty Exercising: Any *new* problems (e.g. chest pain, shortness of breath, or exercise intolerance) should be reported, and medical evaluation undertaken regardless of date of infection or prior level of symptoms. Any student athlete with ongoing symptoms related to a diagnosis of COVID-19 requires a comprehensive evaluation to exclude heart and lung disorders that carry a risk of arrhythmia (such as myocarditis), respiratory compromise, sudden cardiac arrest or sudden death. No such symptomatic athlete should return to sport until medically cleared by a physician.**
* Student-athletes with suspected myocarditis will be required to follow myocarditis guidelines as outlined in: Eligibility and Disqualification Recommendations for Competitive Athletes with Cardiovascular Abnormalities JACC 2015.

**Additional COVID-19 guidance and recommendations can be found in the full document linked above.** All guidance is based upon current studies, evidence base, and available data regarding student athletes and COVID-19 and is subject to change. Further communications will be sent as additional information and recommendations develop.

1. [**Athletic Pre-participation Physical Examinations**](http://ims.informz.net/IMS/data/images/Sports%20Medicine/6-Preparticipation%20Physical%20Form%20Update-FINAL_1114_18YRS.pdf)

Iowa Code requires each athlete in grades 7- 12 to have an athletic pre-participation physical examination annually. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Iowa legislature, through [House File 2627](https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/88/HF2627.pdf), has approved an **extension of existing pre-participation physical examinations signed on or after July 1, 2019 to certify if a student may safely engage in athletic competition through December 31, 2020.**

The PPE form contains health history information and physical examination components that the Committee on Sports Medicine considers minimum requirements when performing pre-participation physicals. The PPE form linked above was updated by the Committee on Sports Medicine of the Iowa Medical Society in May 2014 and conforms to the 4th Edition of the PPE Consensus Monograph published in 2010.

1. Emergency Action Plans – [**Safe Sports School**](http://www.nata.org/advocacy/youth-sports-safety/safe-sports-schools)

An initiative to help school administrators and health care providers evaluate their plans and procedures for the prevention and care of student-athletes is the National Athletic Trainers’ Associations’ “Safe Sports School” program. The program evaluates ten plans & procedures regarding health services:

* Create a **positive athletic health care administrative system**.
* Provide or coordinate pre-participation physical examinations.
* Promote safe and appropriate practice and competition facilities.
* Plan for selection, fit, function, and proper maintenance of athletic equipment.
* Provide a permanent, appropriately equipped area to evaluate and treat injured athletes.
* Develop injury and illness prevention strategies, including protocols for environmental conditions.
* Provide or facilitate injury intervention.
* Create and rehearse venue-specific Emergency Action Plans.
* Provide or facilitate psychosocial consultation and nutritional counseling/education.
* Be sure athletes and parents are educated on the potential benefits and risks in sports as well as their responsibilities.

The comprehensive athletic care administrative team includes a physician director, school administrator, school medical personnel (e.g. school nurse) and an athletic trainer as the coordinator. The purpose of the team is to enhance communication between school personnel and local or team physicians. We encourage you to visit with your local school’s athletic director about becoming a Safe Sports School.

* [Anyone Can Save a Life](http://www.anyonecansavealife.org/) – The IHSAA continues to provide high school athletic directors’ information on “Anyone Can Save a Life”, which is a program promoting the development of emergency action plans and accessibility of AED’s at school activities. We encourage you to visit with your local school’s athletic director regarding these two topics.
* [Sudden Cardiac Arrest](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CardiacArrestInfoSheet.pdf) – Part of any emergency action plan includes knowing what to do in a sudden cardiac arrest. The information sheet at the link below will be sent to all athletic directors this fall as way for them to educate student-athletes, coaches and parents/guardians. We encourage you to promote this information whenever possible.
1. [Concussion Management](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ConcussionReturntoPlayProtocol.pdf)

Information on Iowa’s concussion management protocol and return to participation protocol required under Iowa Code 280.13C. Effective July 1, 2019, schools are required to have adopted the RTP protocol below. We encourage you to check with your local school’s administration regarding adoption of this protocol.

* [Concussion Management Guidelines for Iowa Schools](https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/32/Iowa%20Concussion%20Guidelines%202017%20-%20electronic.pdf) – Effective July 1, 2019, schools were also required to develop a return-to-learn (RTL) plan. This document was created by the Iowa Department of Public Health to assist schools in developing this plan.
* [AAP Returning to Learning Following a Concussion](https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/5/948) – Return to learn is the emerging issue among those managing concussions in student-athletes. The American Academy of Pediatrics has an excellent article on returning to learn following a concussion.
* [Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport](https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/51/11/838) – The 5th international conference on concussion in sport was held in Berlin, October 2016, and the publication is now available.
1. Exertional Heat Illness
* [IHSAA Football Heat Acclimatization Policy](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FootballHeatAcclimation.pdf) - In the fall of 2013, the Iowa High School Athletic Association adopted a heat acclimatization policy for 9-12 interscholastic football. We appreciate you emphasizing the importance of proper heat acclimatization with any coaches, school administrators, players, and parents with whom you have an opportunity to speak.
* [Exertional Heat Illness Excerpt](http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/white-paper-Exertional-Heat-Illness.pdf) from White Paper Presented at Collaborative Solutions for Safety in Sport Meeting, March 26-27, 2015. Page 14 of this link provides Evidence-Based Practice Recommendations & Treatment Policy Points for Treating Exertional Heat Stroke. The emphasis is on cooling BEFORE transport.
1. [IHSAA Football Contact Limitation Policy](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FootballContactLimitation.pdf)

Beginning with the 2015 football season, the Iowa High School Athletic Association adopted a policy limiting daily and weekly contact during preseason and regular season practices. This is one of the many steps taken to minimize the risk of concussion by football players.

1. [Medical Release for Return to Athletic Participation](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MedicalReleasetoReturntoParticipation.pdf)

The Iowa Medical Society Committee on Sports Medicine and Iowa High School Athletic Association have developed a medical release form that is recommended, but not required, when returning an injured student-athlete to participation following a concussion or other injury. The second page of the form provides guidelines to help licensed health care providers determine a student’s readiness to return to participation following a concussion.

1. [Medical Conditions Affecting Sports Participation](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MedicalConditionsSportsParticipation.pdf)

The 4th Edition of the PPE Consensus Monograph published in 2010 contains concise and useful guidelines concerning the sports participation status of adolescents with certain medical conditions.

1. [IHSAA Wrestling Communicable Skin Condition Report](https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MedicalConditionsSportsParticipation.pdf)

This report is required for use when clearing a wrestler with a suspect skin condition to return to participation (practice or competition). The form provides information that should make it easier for the health care provider to indicate the location of any lesions on the face and provide specific information about a wrestler's readiness to return to participation.

1. [IHSAA Sports Medicine & Wellness](https://www.iahsaa.org/information/sports-medicine-wellness-info/)

There is no copyright on any of the information contained in this mailing or the information on student-athlete safety, which appears on the Iowa High School Athletic Association web site.

1. [Iowa Athletic Trainers Society](http://www.iowaats.com/) – Additional resources available on the IATS website.

**By working together, the Iowa Medical Society, the Iowa High School Athletic Association, and physicians across the state have created a safer environment in which student-athletes may participate.** We thank you for your efforts in caring for student-athletes and encourage you to contact the Iowa Medical Society or Iowa High School Athletic Association if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Bryan Warme, MD Tom Keating

Chair, Committee on Sports Medicine Executive Director

Iowa Medical Society Iowa High School Athletic Association