



## Return to sports after COVID-19 illness

A very rare complication of the COVID-19 virus is myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). Though this only occurs in a very small percentage of the pediatric population after a COVID-19 illness, it is still important not to miss. It is important to discuss returning to physical activity, and in some instances do a physical exam, before returning to sports participation after COVID-19 illness.

We follow the American Academy of Pediatrics return to play guidelines. Children fall into 2 main categories and recommendations for follow-up are below. The primary reason for follow-up before beginning exercise is to ensure there are no cardiac symptoms. **Symptoms to watch for include chest pain, shortness of breath more so than with a typical cold, new-onset heart palpitations (feeling like the heart is “beating funny”) or passing out (or feeling like he/she is about to pass out). If any symptoms occur, stop exercise immediately and call our office.**

Illness Severity	<u>Mild Illness:</u>	<u>Moderate Illness:</u>
	<4 days of fever >100.4°F; <1 week of muscle aches, chills, and decreased energy	≥4 days of fever >100.4°F, ≥1 week of muscle aches, chills, or decreased energy, or a non-ICU hospital stay
<b>When to follow-up with PCP</b>	5 days have passed from symptom onset or positive test, and a minimum of 1 day of symptom resolution (excluding loss of taste/smell) without fever-reducing medicine	10 days have passed from symptom onset or positive test, and a minimum of 1 day of symptom resolution (excluding loss of taste/smell) without fever-reducing medicine
<b>Type of follow-up needed</b>	This will depend based on the PCP and an in office visit may be needed	In office visit and possible referral for cardiac EKG screening

Once cleared, follow a gradual return-to-play exercise progression

- 11 and younger: progress back to activity gradually, according to his/her own tolerance
- 12 and older: follow a graduated return to play progression

**Day 1 and Day 2 - (2 Days Minimum)** - 15 minutes or less: Light activity (walking, jogging, stationary bike), intensity no greater than 70% of maximum heart rate. NO resistance training.

**Day 3 - (1 Day Minimum)** - 30 minutes or less: Add simple movement activities (eg. running drills) - intensity no greater than 80% of maximum heart rate.

**Day 4 - (1 Day Minimum)** - 45 minutes or less- Progress to more complex training - intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate. May add light resistance training.

**Day 5 and Day 6 - (2 Days Minimum)** - 60 minutes – Normal training activity - intensity no greater than 80% maximum heart rate.

**Day 7 - Return to full activity/participation**