



MEMORANDUM

To: Colorado Student and Youth Athletics Organizations

CC: CHSAA, Local Public Health Agencies

From: CDPHE Communicable Disease Branch

Subject: Quarantine of Student and Youth Athletes

Date: February 24, 2021

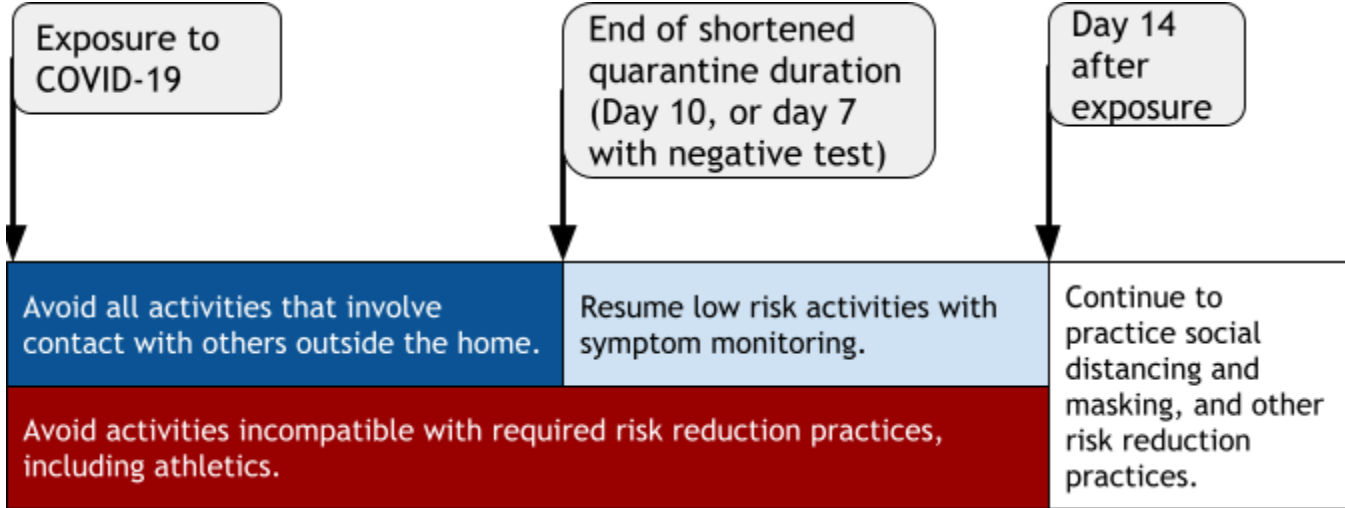
In December 2020, CDPHE updated its webpage [“How to quarantine”](#) to align with the CDC’s recommendations for [“Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing”](#). This update included options for shorter quarantine durations of as short as 7 days when combined with diagnostic testing, or 10 days in the absence of testing, under certain conditions. These shorter durations of quarantine are expected to prevent most, but not all, secondary transmission of COVID-19 among people who have been exposed.

The CDC provided estimates that the risk of transmission after 7 days of quarantine might be as high as 12% with antigen testing, and after 10 days with no testing the risk could be as high as 10%. In order to provide adequate disease control when using shortened quarantine options, both CDC and CDPHE recommend that individuals continue to follow risk-reduction practices during the full 14 days after exposure. These practices include staying 6 feet from others, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, and continuing to monitor for symptoms. In addition, in congregate living settings and other high risk contexts, and when more contagious variants of COVID-19 are found, shorter durations of quarantine are not appropriate and a full 14 day quarantine should be observed. Local public health agencies may also choose to apply the full 14 day quarantine for all individuals in their jurisdiction.

Athletics present a higher risk context for COVID-19 transmission, as demonstrated in a large body of research (including [two recent MMWR](#) publications). In addition, the risk-reduction practices required by both the CDC and CDPHE when shortened quarantine is used are not practical during the vast majority of athletic activities. For example, it is not feasible for wrestlers or basketball players to maintain 6 foot physical distancing during matches or

games, and mask wearing is not possible during aquatic sports. Therefore, athletes are required to refrain from group athletic activities for 14 days following exposure to a potentially ill individual when those activities do not allow the individual to follow required risk reduction practices. Individual training that occurs outdoors or in an otherwise unoccupied indoor space may be allowed, however enhanced cleaning and ventilation of any indoor spaces should be practiced.

Between the end of a shortened quarantine period and day 14, individuals may resume participation in lower-risk activities. These include attending class, most work activities that do not involve contact with vulnerable populations, and other activities allowed under the current Dial level which allow for required risk reduction practices. Symptom monitoring should be continued through day 14, and individuals should immediately isolate and seek testing if they develop symptoms during this 14 day period.



A separate, but related, effect of the higher risk nature of athletics occurs during contact tracing after a case is identified. School-based athletic activities are required to use the [“Who is a close contact”](#) tool, which classifies athletic activities as higher risk and requires use of “Enhanced contact identification.” This is due to the greater risk of forceful exhalation, the frequency of direct physical contact, difficulties associated with identifying the precise position of all participants throughout the duration of the contest, as well as the lack of a mask wearing during certain athletic activities (e.g. aquatics).

If a participant in an athletic activity is found to be ill with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19, in general all participants in the event (including inactive players on the sideline) will be considered exposed and may be required to quarantine. Due to the minimum 12 foot spacing between the participants and the crowd, the risk to nonparticipating attendees is lower, and they will not be required to quarantine in the case of an ill participant.

If a case is identified among spectators, the local public health agency may determine that either some or all spectators will be required to quarantine.

