

Sports Testing Frequently Asked Questions

On March 19, 2021, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced that individuals ages 13 -19 participating in contact and non-contact athletic activities must test for COVID-19 on a weekly basis, in addition to following certain safety measures. Additional testing is required for contact sports where the sports organizer has determined that a mask cannot be safely worn, and a negative COVID-19 test result is required before participating in contact, unmasked activities. These requirements apply to both school and non-school sponsored athletics.

Along with other mitigation practices, like wearing a mask whenever possible, screening for symptoms before practice or play, and frequent cleaning, the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#) outlines how testing for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) can and must be used as part of a comprehensive strategy to allow athletes to compete in a safer way.

Testing Requirements

Who must participate in COVID-19 athletics testing?

All individuals ages 13 – 19 participating in contact and non-contact athletic activities in the state of Michigan must test for SARS-CoV-2 on a weekly basis. Individuals who participate in contact sports that are officially deemed unsafe to play while masked must test for SARS-CoV-2 before any unmasked activity, up to 3 times weekly.

Does this testing requirement apply to athletic activities that are not affiliated with schools?

Yes. This testing requirement applies to individuals participating in athletic activities that are school-sponsored as well as those which are not, such as club sports or leagues.

Do private athletic lessons or pick-up games need to follow the testing requirements?

This testing program is required for members of an organized sports team or league who participate in competitions or practices. Private lessons or athletic activities not part of an organized team or league are not required to comply with testing requirements per [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#). For example, individuals ages 13 – 19 who swim laps or go for a jog do not need to participate in this testing program. All other mitigation and safety measures in gyms and other settings to prevent the spread of COVID-19 still apply.

What if I do not want my child to be tested? Can my child still play?

Athletes ages 13 -19 who do not follow the new testing requirements will be unable to participate in team sports activities where testing is required, per [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#).

Should participants who have already had and recovered from COVID-19 still participate in testing?

Athletes who have recovered from a symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the past three months and remain symptom-free may participate in team sports activities without testing if they can provide a letter from their doctor attesting that they fall into this category (the individual must have had a positive diagnostic test within three months and must have displayed symptoms. An antibody test is not sufficient).

Any participant that displays COVID-19 symptoms at any time, regardless of prior COVID-19 diagnosis, must stay home and self-isolate in accordance with [CDC guidance](#). The participant must resume testing after 90 days from the date of symptom onset from the laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis.

If an individual has been fully vaccinated for COVID-19, do they still have to participate in the testing program?

At this time, MDHHS is requiring testing for all athletes ages 13 – 19, even if they have received the final dose of an FDA-approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccine.

If an individual is under the age of 13 but plays on a team with 13-year-olds, should they be tested?

MDHHS recommends that all members of the team obtain testing, but the testing requirement only applies to athletes ages 13 -19.

Why are these testing requirements necessary?

As of March 11, 2021, local health departments in Michigan had reported 162 new and ongoing outbreaks among K-12 schools, with 54 of those outbreaks reported in the week prior. In the four weeks prior to March 19, 2021, spread of COVID-19 has risen 105% amongst persons aged 10-19 in Michigan. Additionally, there are 135 identified outbreaks among minors participating in school and club sports in Michigan. The social activities surrounding sports, such as team meals and parties, may be a major factor in this spread. To promote the continued safe operation of in-person schools, additional testing measures related to all youth sports activities are warranted.

Testing Logistics

When do schools/sports organizations have to begin testing?

Schools/sports organizations must begin testing athletes ages 13 – 19 within seven days of the start date, April 2, 2021, to be in compliance with weekly testing requirements. Individuals participating in contact sports where masks cannot be safely worn may need to test more than once the first week these requirements go into effect, per the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for](#)

[Athletics](#). The exact testing schedule will be set by the participating school or sports organization.

How often does testing have to be conducted?

Weekly testing is required for individuals ages 13 – 19 who participate in team athletic activities. Additional testing is required for contact sports where a mask cannot safely be worn.

If a sports organizer has officially determined that a mask cannot safely be worn while engaging in a contact sport, all teams within the organization are required to test athletes in the 24 hours before any **unmasked** practice or completion.

Teams in all other contact and con-contact sports including those where masks cannot be worn, such as swimming and diving, are required to test on a weekly basis. To the extent possible, rapid testing should be performed in the 24 hours before any inter-team competition, especially before athletes come into close contact with other athletes from outside the local community.

The exact testing cadence can be set by the participating school, team, or governing association.

How can schools/sports organizations administer tests to their athletes?

There are a variety of methods schools/sports organizations can employ to be compliant with the testing requirements in the March 19, 2021 Order and the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#), including:

- Work with local schools to get athletes tested as students
- Use local testing sites in your community
- Contract with a vendor/ lab
- Procure your own antigen testing supplies
- Enroll in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program and request antigen testing kits (more information below)

Are there free testing sites across the state, including UP and for those in rural, inner city areas?

Yes. You can find options for free COVID-19 testing in the community via our website: <https://www.solvehealth.com/search?cobrandedSrpLocation=MI>.

What happens if someone tests positive?

The person should immediately be sent home and should get a PCR or molecular test within 48 hours to confirm their test result. A PCR test is a lab-based, diagnostic test for SARS-CoV-2 detection. PCR tests detect genetic material that is specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus and can detect the virus within days of infection, even those who have no symptoms.

Individuals can find a PCR testing location near them at www.Michigan.gov/coronavirustest. If the person can show proof of a negative PCR test taken within 48 hours after the positive antigen test, they may resume athletic activities. If they have a positive PCR test or do not obtain a test within 48 hours, they may not participate in any athletic activities for 10 days.

What if that person later tests negative with a lab-based test? What happens if someone is told they were a "[close contact](#)" of someone with COVID-19 and must quarantine, but they have had a negative rapid antigen test?

Scenario (athlete, coach, or staff)	May not participate in athletic practice or play until:
Asymptomatic and " close contact " of a person with COVID-19	Local or state health department quarantine requirements have been met (usually 10-14 days).
Symptoms including fever, cough, other respiratory symptoms, or those symptoms outlined by the CDC	Symptoms have resolved for more than 24 hours and the person has a negative molecular (PCR) (not antigen) test
Asymptomatic with positive rapid antigen test	The person may resume practice or play if they have a subsequent negative molecular test within 48 hours. Otherwise, isolate for 10 days from date of first positive test, or as per CDC guidelines
Asymptomatic with positive PCR (molecular) test	Isolate for 10 days from date of first positive test, or as per CDC guidelines

Students or coaches with symptoms or a positive antigen test result should receive a molecular (PCR) test immediately.

What happens to a team if one person has a positive antigen test?

Any team members with [close contacts](#) to that person will need to quarantine according to their local or state health department requirements unless the person obtains a negative PCR test result within 48 hours. If a program participant does test positive, that person must cooperate with contact tracing, and any others who have had close contact will need to quarantine (per the table above).

MI Safer Sports Testing Program

What is the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

MI Safer Sports is a free COVID-19 testing program offered by MDHHS for Michigan schools and non-school affiliated sports organizations. MI Safer Sports will provide training, guidance, and rapid antigen testing materials to those who sign up and agree to the program requirements.

To support athletes and teams to incorporate COVID-19 testing into their sports season, MDHHS is offering the MI Safer Sports Testing Program to provide free rapid antigen testing to student athletes.

Does my school/ sports organization have to enroll in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

No. Enrolling in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program is just one option for schools/sports organizations to comply with the testing requirements in the March 19, 2021 Order and the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#). Each school/sports organizer can determine how to implement the new athletic testing requirements set forth in [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#). Other options include:

- Work with local schools to get athletes tested as students
- Use local testing sites in your community
- Contract with a vendor/ lab
- Procure your own antigen testing supplies

What kind of tests will be used in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

The MI Safer Sports Testing Program will use antigen tests. Antigen tests are commonly used in the diagnosis of respiratory pathogens. They detect the presence of a specific viral antigen, which implies that the individual currently has a viral infection. The FDA has granted emergency use authorization for antigen tests that can identify SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2 can be performed without special equipment and can be administered by trained staff. More information on antigen tests is available [here](#) (MDHHS) and [here](#) (CDC).

Are tests free if my school/ sports organization participates in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

MDHHS is providing free antigen test supplies to schools/sports organizations. MDHHS will provide 1 test per week for most teams, or up to 3 tests per week for contact sports where masks cannot be safely worn.

However, any staff time, personal protective equipment, or other costs to run the program are the responsibility of the school/sports organization.

What is needed for a school to sign up for the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

Interested teams should complete the eight steps to participate at www.Michigan.gov/sportsCOVIDinfo.

1. Engage the community.
2. Identify points of contact.
3. Train staff.
4. Plan for testing.
5. Plan for outbreak management.
6. Obtain consent and codes of conduct from participants.
7. Fill out the [enrollment survey](#).
8. Report test results as required.

The enrollment form says each school or organization needs a “CLIA waiver.” What is a CLIA waiver and how do I know if I have one or need one?

The Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) designate different types of tests that may be performed in certified scientific laboratories. The rapid antigen tests provided by the MI Safer Sports program can be performed outside a professional lab (for example, on school grounds), but only if that site has obtained a “CLIA waiver.” By law, any site where antigen testing is being performed requires a CLIA waiver.

Currently, all Michigan public schools and all members of Michigan Association of Non-public Schools have a CLIA waiver to perform rapid antigen testing at their school sites.

All other schools or organizations require a CLIA waiver to perform testing. To receive a CLIA waiver, organizations should complete the [CLIA waiver application](#) and submit it to LARA-BCHS-DHHS-COW-TESTING-APPLICATION@michigan.gov. No specific credentials are required to obtain a CLIA waiver. The site performing the testing must follow the guidelines specified under the waiver. The cost is \$180 for two years.

Non-profit organizations can obtain a CLIA waiver for various sites/ clubs. Please contact MDHHS-SportsCOVIDinfo@michigan.gov for more information about this process.

How do I get my teams’ tests from the MI Safer Sports Testing Program?

Schools: After you have completed the steps to enroll, including the [enrollment survey](#), MDHHS will let your intermediate school district (ISD) know how many tests you need for your teams. Communicate with your ISD to make arrangements to pick up or ship your antigen tests.

Non-school sponsored sports may request online that test be shipped to them. Sports organizers can enroll via the [MI Safer Sports Enrollment Form](#).

Which intermediate school district (ISD) am I part of?

[Click here](#) to see the ISD in which your school is located. If you are unsure, you can search your school name here: <https://cepi.state.mi.us/eem/EntitySearchQuick.aspx> (Go to “Search by characteristic” > Search by school name or portion of your school name, county, or ZIP code > Find your school name and click on the name to open up the school profile > Look under **ISD**)

I am an ISD that has more tests than I need—what do I do with them?

Please hold on to any extra tests until the end of the 2020-2021 school year. At that point, MDHHS will work with ISDs to redistribute any extra tests to other locations where they will be used.

Testing Protocol for enrollees in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program

Who is responsible for administering the rapid tests and how will they be trained?

Anyone who is trained can administer these tests. Individuals who administer the tests must complete two online training videos [here](#) and [here](#).

How will testing work?

Trained personnel from participating school/sports organizations will administer the point of care (rapid) antigen tests on site. Individuals receiving the test will be able to use nasal swabs to swab their own nostrils to provide samples.

How can schools/sports organizations get access to additional personal protective equipment (PPE) for testing?

Schools/sports organizations can [contact their local emergency management program](#) if they need assistance obtaining additional PPE for testing. Schools can also request PPE for donation or purchase at discounted rates [here](#).

My school/sports organization does not have a biohazard waste disposal process. Can we dispose of waste from the BinaxNOW test kits in the regular trash?

No. Used antigen tests should be disposed of as biohazardous waste materials in an appropriately labeled biohazard bag in compliance with manufacturer's disposal instructions and to comply with the CLIA waiver that allows these tests to be used on site. Pick-up of these materials can be contracted through a school's existing waste pick-up programs (as an extension of their current solid waste management agreements or in addition to any biohazardous pick-up already in place for sharps/used diabetic test materials/etc.) or can be autoclaved.

MDHHS cannot provide biohazard pick-up or disposal. You may be able to work with local police or fire or a local health care provider to share biohazard pick-up and disposal contracts. You can find a list of Michigan-based medical waste disposal services here:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/whm-stsws-medical-waste-disposal-services-200704_192787_7.pdf.

General Athletics Questions

Do athletes still need to wear face masks while following these testing requirements?

Yes. Athletes, coaches, and other team personnel must wear a face mask at all times, except:

- during activities that a sports organizer has determined are unsafe to engage in while masked (specific exceptions are listed in the [MDHHS Interim Guidance for Athletics](#)); OR
- while in active participation of non-contact sport athletic activities conducted outdoors and at least six feet of physical distancing can be consistently maintained. This does not include individuals participating in contact sports, meaning sports that involve more than occasional and fleeting contact.

Face masks must be worn by all individuals when not engaged in active participation, such as when on the bench, in the dugout, during breaks or intermissions, between races/events/matches/rounds, etc.

Where can teams hold practices and competitions? May spectators attend?

Practices and competitions may be held at school facilities or other community or privately owned facilities, including stadiums or arenas (with 5,000+ fixed seating capacity). It is recommended that spectators are limited to two per athlete. The total capacity of the facility or venue may be limited by local or state regulation.

As of March 19, 2021, the following capacity limits apply:

- Indoor Facilities (fixed seating for less than 5,000 spectators):
 - Limited to 300 spectators
 - Total occupancy (including athletes, coaches, staff, and spectators) must not exceed 50% of the capacity limits established by the fire marshal.
- Outdoor Facilities (fixed seating for less than 5,000 spectators):
 - Limited to 1,000 spectators
 - Total occupancy (including athletes, coaches, staff, and spectators) must not exceed 50% of the capacity limits established by the fire marshal, if applicable.
- Outdoor Stadiums or Arenas (fixed seating for at least 5,000 spectators):
 - Generally limited to 1,000 spectators
 - However, may allow up to 20% fixed seating capacity if the facility does all the following:
 - establish an infection control plan that complies with the protocols included in MDHHS's Enhanced Outdoor Stadium and Arena Guidance;
 - post their plan publicly;
 - provide infection control plans to the local health department and MDHHS at least seven days before scheduled events; and
 - administer a testing program as specified in MDHHS's Interim Guidance for Athletics.

- Indoor Stadiums or Arenas (fixed seating for at least 5,000 spectators):
 - o Limited to 375 spectators
- Indoor Stadiums or Arenas (fixed seating for at least 10,000 spectators):
 - o Limited to 750 spectators

Reporting Protocol

How should schools/sports organizations report test results?

All polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests conducted for COVID-19 must be reported to MDHHS in a manner directed by MDHHS via the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (i.e., electronic laboratory reports or manual case entry) within 4 hours of completion of the test, whether positive or negative.

Antigen tests for COVID-19 must be reported to the department in a manner directed by MDHHS within 4 hours of completion of the test, if the result is positive. On a day when testing occurs, the total number of negative antigen tests completed must be reported within 24 hours.

The following patient data elements are required to be reported to the Department for all PCR COVID-19 diagnostic testing results and all positive antigen tests:

- Full name
- Full residential address
- Residence County
- Telephone number
- Date of birth or age
- Sex
- Patient's race
- Patients ethnicity, including both Hispanic/Latino and Arab ethnicities
- The specific laboratory test
- Date test ordered
- Date test performed
- Test results
- The name and address of the reporting laboratory (or location of the test if reporting a positive antigen test)
- The name, address, and telephone number of the person who ordered the test

Any laboratory requisition form used by physicians or other health care professionals must include the above data elements to ensure laboratories are able to comply with the Department's demographic reporting requirements.

For schools/ sports organizers who enroll in the MI Safer Sports Testing Program, all positive antigen test results should be reported at this [link](#).

If an individual tests positive, who are schools/sports organizations required to notify?

The school/sports organization must notify MDHHS and the local health department of any positive results. The result is also counted as a probable case for school mandated public reporting. [More information on notification requirements and privacy considerations under state and federal law can be found here.](#)

Is reporting for the sports testing requirements HIPAA-compliant? How will participant privacy be protected?

Schools/sports organizations will be entering test results directly into a portal for the Michigan Disease Surveillance System (MDSS), the state's system for reporting communicable diseases. Results will only be used for public health monitoring purposes – not sold or shared with law enforcement agencies. This process does not, on its own, create FERPA- or HIPAA-covered records in MDSS. To the extent HIPAA applies to you as a reporting entity, reporting this data is a public health activity that is permitted under HIPAA. To the extent FERPA applies to the records to be reported, it is up to the school/sports organization to either obtain the necessary FERPA consent or determine that an exception under FERPA applies.

MDHHS has supplied [a template consent form](#) for schools/sports organizations to build upon based on their own needs and processes for this pilot. If a school/sports organization creates its own process or forms, then that school/sports organization should consult its own lawyers about compliance with relevant privacy laws. Participating schools/sports organizations should have a plan in place to securely retain any records developed for this program, in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, and provide them to MDHHS upon request at any time.

Testing Oversight and Additional Resources

How are the testing requirements being monitored?

Schools/sports organizations must document their compliance with all requirements. These plans must be made available to MDHHS or local health departments upon request.

How do schools/sports organizers verify that athletes get tested if we don't do on-site testing?

Schools/sports organizations have the flexibility to determine how to verify testing. Options include, but are not limited to: time stamped photos of students holding negative test cards, reports from a lab, or the NAVICA app which pairs with certain rapid antigen tests.

Where can I find more information?

Interested districts or organizations are invited to attend or view MDHHS's series of webinars outlining further details and next steps. Find links to and recordings of these sessions at www.Michigan.gov/sportsCOVIDinfo.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Please send an email to MDHHS-Binaxnowrequest@michigan.gov.