



COVID-19

CDC has updated its guidance for people who are fully vaccinated. See [Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#).

Guidance for Operating Youth Camps

Updated May 28, 2021

[Print](#)

Summary of Recent Changes

Updates as of May 28, 2021



- Added section on promoting vaccination.
- Added section on planning and preparing for camp.
- Added information on [choosing safer activities](#).
- Added link to information for staff and campers who are at [increased risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19](#).
- Added guidance for camps where everyone is fully vaccinated.
- Updated guidance for camps where not everyone is fully vaccinated.
- Added information on [Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2](#).
- Updated guidance on outdoor mask usage.
- Updated information on trips outside of camp.

[View Previous Updates](#)

Key Points

- COVID-19 vaccines are [safe and effective](#), and widely accessible in the United States.
- Everyone aged 12 years and older is recommended to be [vaccinated](#) against COVID-19 as soon as possible to keep from getting and spreading COVID-19.
- This guidance is intended for all types of youth day and overnight camps. The guidance outlines strategies that camp programs can use to help maintain healthy environments and operations, lower the risk of COVID-19 spread in their programs, prepare for when someone is sick with COVID-19, and support coping and resilience.
- For camps where everyone is [fully vaccinated](#) prior to the start of camp, it is safe to return to full capacity, without masking, and without physical distancing in accordance with [CDC's Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#); except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.
- Although people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, camp programs should be supportive of campers or staff who choose to wear a mask.
- Consistent and layered use of multiple prevention strategies can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect people who are not fully vaccinated including campers, staff, and their families.

- This guidance describes physical distancing recommendations for youth camps. These recommendations align with current evidence for physical distancing in K-12 [schools](#).
- Campers should be assigned to cohorts that will remain together for the entire camp session without mixing, to the largest extent possible.
- This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—**not replace**—any federal, state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which camps must comply

Introduction

Youth camps can play an important role in the lives of children, including supporting their social, emotional, and physical development. Camps provide opportunities for children to try new activities, develop relationships, develop social and emotional skills, and be physically active. In addition to allowing for free play and unstructured learning, many camps also incorporate educational content. This interim guidance is intended to help camp administrators operate camps while slowing the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 thereby protecting campers, their families, staff, and communities.

While fewer [children](#) have been sick with COVID-19 compared with adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, can spread the virus to others, and can have severe outcomes.^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} Children who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms (“asymptomatic”) can still spread the virus to others. Children are more likely to be asymptomatic or have mild, non-specific symptoms and they are [much less likely than adults to have severe illness or die](#).^{6, 7} Both adults and children with certain [underlying medical conditions](#) are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Currently, we are still learning how well the COVID-19 vaccines protect people with weakened immune systems, including people who take immunosuppressive medications. Camp administrators should advise staff and parents/caregivers/guardians of campers with weakened immune systems on the importance of talking to their healthcare providers to discuss their activities and [extra precautions](#) they may need to keep taking to prevent COVID-19. Out of an abundance of caution, CDC recommends continued masking and physical distancing for people with weakened immune systems.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy in the United States to help end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are not fully vaccinated, including children under the age of 12 years who are not yet eligible for vaccination, still need to use all the tools we have available to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. For any campers or staff who are not [fully vaccinated](#), consistent use of multiple [prevention strategies](#) as described in this document will limit or slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 in many settings, including youth camps.^{8, 9, 10, 11}

This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—**not replace**—any federal, state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which camps must comply.

This guidance is intended for all types of youth day camps with additional guidance for [overnight camps](#). Summer learning programs should follow CDC’s [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention](#).

Section 1: Planning and Preparing

Planning and preparing are important steps to take before reopening and for continuing camp operations. Each camp program should have a plan in place to protect staff, campers, families, and communities from the spread of COVID-19. This plan should be incorporated into their overall operational plan. The plan should include steps to take when a camper or staff member has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, has [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, is tested for COVID-19, or receives a positive test result for COVID-19. The plan should be developed in collaboration with regulatory agencies, state, local, territorial, and tribal public health departments, and other organizations that support the camp program. It should also align with state and local licensing regulations. Camp operators should involve staff, parents/guardians, and other community partners (for example, health centers) in the development of the plan.

The plan should address, at a minimum, the following topics

- Strongly encourage COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible campers and staff

- Document protocol/policy differences, if any, for people who are [fully vaccinated](#) versus those who are not fully vaccinated
- Health screening for infectious illnesses, including COVID-19
- Diagnostic and screening [testing](#) for COVID-19
- The application of multiple [prevention strategies](#) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated
- Reviewing safety protocols for staff and campers who are at [increased risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19](#)
- Modifying camp activities to [choose safer activities](#) such as outdoor over indoor activities
- Travel to and from overnight camp
- Travel to and from offsite camp activities
- Cleaning [facilities](#) and equipment
- Proper use of personal protective equipment by any healthcare staff
- Consider implementation of [flexible, supportive paid sick leave and supportive policies and practices](#) as part of a comprehensive approach to prevent and reduce transmission
- Policies and practices that allow families flexibility, such as changing camp registration dates, if campers or their families are affected by COVID-19 (such as being in [quarantine](#), [isolation](#) or waiting on COVID-19 test results)
- Managing a suspected or confirmed case(s) of COVID-19, including [contact tracing](#) efforts in combination with [isolation](#) for the ill person(s) and [quarantine](#)
- Planning for an outbreak
- Establishment of correspondence and contact information for local and state health departments in the event of an outbreak
- Provision of maps/directions to the nearest hospital or emergency treatment facility
- Designation of a staff person (for example, camp nurse or other healthcare provider) to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All camp staff and families should know who this person is and have that person's contact information
- Ensure communication with parents and caregivers about camp policies and practices

If camp administrators are requesting that campers and staff submit documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status, this documentation should be secured consistent with applicable laws and appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy and confidentiality of [personally identifiable information](#), health information, employee records and, as applicable, [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\)](#)-sensitive information from being unlawfully used or disclosed.

Health Equity Considerations in Prevention Strategies

Considerations of social and racial injustice and inequity are at the forefront of public health, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp administrators can [promote health equity](#) by ensuring campers and staff have resources to support physical and mental health. Federal and state disability laws may require an individualized approach for working with children and youth with disabilities consistent with the camper's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. Camp administrators should consider adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies when serving [people with disabilities](#), while maintaining efforts to protect all campers and staff from COVID-19.

Section 2: Promote Vaccination

People who are fully vaccinated are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. A [growing body of evidence](#) suggests that people who are fully vaccinated are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or transmit COVID-19 to others. People who are [fully vaccinated](#) are safe to resume activities in most settings like they did prior to the pandemic, except where prevention measures are required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens

CDC recommends that everyone 12 years and older get fully vaccinated against COVID-19. See [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#) for more information.

Camps can help increase vaccine uptake among campers, their families, and staff by providing information about COVID-19 vaccination, promoting vaccination, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make it as easy and convenient as possible for staff and others to get vaccinated.

To promote vaccination, camps can

- Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where staff, campers, and their families can get vaccinated in their community.
- Develop educational messaging for vaccination campaigns to [build vaccine confidence](#), and to emphasize that individuals are fully vaccinated two weeks after completing the vaccine series.
- Use CDC COVID-19 [Vaccination Toolkits to educate](#) camp families and communities and promote COVID-19 vaccination.
- Offer flexible, supportive leave options (e.g., paid sick leave) for staff to get vaccinated and to those who may experience [side effects](#) after vaccination. See CDC's [post-vaccination Considerations for Workplaces](#).
- Remind camp families that in addition to COVID-19 vaccination, children and adolescents should continue to obtain all [recommended routine and catch-up vaccinations](#) in order to protect themselves, peers, and staff from other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Individuals who are fully vaccinated should see [CDC's Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) for more information on settings and situations that may differ for them.

Variants

Variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 are spreading in the United States. Current data suggest that COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States offer protection against known variants. CDC has systems in place to monitor how common these variants are and to look for the emergence of new variants. CDC will continue to monitor variants to see if they have any impact on how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. For more information see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/work.html>

Section 3: Guidance for Day or Overnight Camps Where Everyone is Fully Vaccinated

This section is intended for camp administrators who are considering or planning to offer camp opportunities where everyone is fully vaccinated.

Some campers or staff might not be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine due to medical or other conditions and should be considered by Camps for exemptions to COVID-19 vaccine requirements. Camps will need to determine prevention strategies, accommodations, and policies for any campers or staff who do not meet their requirements.

Masks

Staff and campers who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks at camp, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Although fully vaccinated persons do not need to wear masks, camps can be supportive of staff or campers who choose to continue to wear a mask.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is not necessary for campers and staff who are fully vaccinated except as indicated in [CDC's Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#).

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Camps should continue to facilitate health-promoting behaviors such as [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#) to reduce the spread of infectious disease in general.

Cleaning, Improving Ventilation, and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

Camps should continue to follow [cleaning, disinfecting](#), and [ventilation](#) recommendations, including routine cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared objects. They should also maintain improved ventilation including opening windows, using air filters, and turning on fans.

Testing

People who are fully vaccinated do not need to undergo routine COVID-19 screening testing. If a fully vaccinated person is exposed to someone with COVID-19, they do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Any person participating in camp activities who experiences [COVID-19 symptoms](#) should get a [COVID-19 test](#). Refer to CDC's [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) for more information.

Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

If a camp experiences an outbreak of COVID-19 among people who are fully vaccinated, camp administrators should:

- Promptly contact their state or local public health department and work with them to:
 - Isolate people with [COVID-19-like symptoms](#).
 - Ensure that people with COVID-19 symptoms get tested.
 - Quarantine any unvaccinated close contacts of people with symptoms.
- Notify appropriate family members of all campers.
- People who are fully vaccinated with no COVID-19-like symptoms do not need to quarantine or be restricted from camp following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.
- Support COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing in collaboration with public health officials, and determine whether they need to intensify or implement certain prevention measures.

Section 4: Guidance for Camps Where not Everyone is Fully Vaccinated

Section 4.A. Guidance for Both Day and Overnight Camps

Taking Actions to Lower the Risk of COVID-19 Spread

Camp programs with any campers or staff who are not fully vaccinated should layer multiple [prevention strategies](#) to help protect the people who are not vaccinated, which includes all children under the age of 12 years, and slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Key prevention strategies include:

- Promoting vaccination against COVID-19 for eligible staff, campers, and their family members
- Correctly and consistently using [well-fitted masks](#) that cover the nose and mouth
- [Physical distancing](#), including cohorting (grouping children together to reduce potential exposures)
- [Handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes](#)
- Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities (for example, engaging in outdoor activities whenever possible and increasing [ventilation](#) for indoor activities)
- Routine [cleaning](#) to help maintain healthy facilities
- Staying home if sick or having any [symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Getting tested for COVID-19 if having [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or are unvaccinated and have been a close contact of someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- [Contact tracing](#) in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, and tribal health departments
- [Screening](#) testing
- People who are fully vaccinated should follow CDC's [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

Masks

When people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask correctly, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Given evidence of limited transmission of COVID-19 outdoors, [12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17](#) CDC has updated our guidance for outdoor mask use among people who are not fully vaccinated.

Camp programs should encourage people who are not fully vaccinated and [those who might need extra precautions](#) to wear a mask consistently and correctly:

- **Indoors.** Mask use indoors is strongly encouraged for people who are not fully vaccinated including children. No child under the age of 2 should wear a mask.
- **Outdoors.** In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, particularly in areas of [substantial to high transmission](#), people who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.

Although people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, camp programs should be supportive of campers or staff who choose to wear a mask. Camps may also choose to continue to require masks for vaccinated and not fully vaccinated campers and staff in order to adhere to prevention strategies when it is difficult to tell who has been vaccinated or to set an example for not fully vaccinated campers. Camps should be supportive of campers or staff who choose to wear a mask. Particularly in areas of [substantial to high transmission](#), camps may consider requiring mask use indoors by all people present including vaccinated campers, staff, and other people such as visitors.

Camps with universal mask policies, regardless of vaccination status, should make exceptions for the following categories of people:

- Children under the age of 2 years
- A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) [↗](#) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Campers and staff can use well-fitting [cloth masks](#) with two or more layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric, or [disposable masks](#).

- Teach and reinforce [consistent and correct](#) use of masks. Staff and campers should wear masks over the nose and mouth, especially when physical distancing is difficult. Camp administrators should provide information to staff and campers on [proper use, removal, and washing of masks](#).
- Staff and campers should store masks properly and for reusable masks, wash them regularly to keep them clean. Staff and campers should have more than one mask on hand each day so they can easily replace a used mask with a clean one. Camps might consider having a supply of extra masks on hand. Encourage all individuals to [remove masks correctly](#) and wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol after touching or removing a mask. Store masks somewhere safe to keep them clean, such as in a pocket or backpack. When reusing a mask after a break, keep the same side facing out.

Masks should not be worn when doing outdoor activities that could get masks wet, like using boats and watercraft or swimming at the beach or pool. Because masks should not be worn in pools, campers should maintain physical distance and camps should limit the number of people in the pool at one time. A wet mask can make it difficult to breathe and might not work as intended. Additionally, masks should not be worn when sleeping.

CDC's [guidance on wearing masks](#) includes adaptations and alternatives for various activities where wearing a mask might be more difficult for staff or campers. Learn more: [Science Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2](#)

- Heat-related illness is a long-standing health concern. Many camps have heat policies in place to help ensure that staff and campers do not experience [heat-related illness](#) and, if they do, camp staff know how to properly respond.

- Additional guidance on wearing masks at [overnight camps](#) is provided in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section of this web page.

Camps should be aware of state, local, tribal, and territorial requirements related to the use of masks.

Cohorting and Physical Distancing for Day Camps

Cohorting: Cohorts (or “pods”) are small groups of campers and staff who stay together throughout the day to minimize exposure to other people while at camp. Cohorts should have the same staff stay with the same group of campers and remain together as much as possible for the duration of camp. The use of cohorts can limit spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 between small groups but should not replace other prevention measures within each group, including wearing masks. Campers and staff in the same cohort who are not fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks at all times, except in the situations as noted in the mask section of this guidance. Camps that serve children across a wide range of ages or grade levels should consider creating cohorts. When creating cohorts, consider services for campers with disabilities, English language learners, and other campers who may receive services, and to ensure equity, integration, and other requirements of applicable federal, state, local, tribal and territorial laws, including federal disability laws.

Camps should offer options for accommodations, modifications, and assistance for [people at increased risk for severe COVID-19](#) in order to limit their exposure risk and to facilitate participation in activities.

Reminder: [FDA](#) [✉](#) authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in adolescents on May 10, 2021, and two doses are recommended three weeks apart. Therefore, the earliest any adolescent aged 12-15 years could be fully vaccinated is June 14, 2021.

- **Maintaining Physical Distance:** [People who are fully vaccinated](#) do not need to physically distance except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Camps may choose to implement physical distancing for all campers and staff including vaccinated and not fully vaccinated campers and staff. Physical distancing regardless of vaccination status can improve adherence to distancing and protect privacy. [Physical distancing](#) provides protection for staff and campers who are not fully vaccinated by reducing risk of exposure and limiting the number of close contacts.
- Establish camp policies and implement strategies to promote physical distancing among staff and campers who are not fully vaccinated, indoors and outdoors, including maintaining
 - At least 3 feet between all campers within a cohort
 - At least 6 feet between all campers outside of their cohort
 - At least 6 feet while eating and drinking without a mask indoors, including among people within the same cohort
 - At least 6 feet between campers and staff
 - At least 6 feet between staff
- Use physical or visual guides where possible to reinforce physical distancing of at least 6 feet in areas where not fully vaccinated persons may be interacting with one another (for example reception and dining areas).
- If specialized staff (for example, speech language pathologists) are providing services to campers within multiple cohorts or multiple camp programs, especially when physical distance cannot be maintained, the staff should take prevention measures to limit spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, including getting fully vaccinated before camp begins, wearing masks, and other necessary personal protective equipment. Specialized staff should keep detailed [contact tracing](#) logs.
- Create physical distance between campers on buses or transportation (e.g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible. Campers who live in the same household may be seated together.
- If nap times with mats are scheduled for campers who are not fully vaccinated, assign campers’ naptime mats to individual children, sanitize before and after use, and space the mats out as much as possible. Place campers head-to-toe to ensure distance between their faces.
 - Masks should not be worn when sleeping.
- More information on physical distancing for cohorts in overnight camps is provided in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section of this web page.

Section 4.B. Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps

In addition to the actions listed above, overnight camps can also consider the following:

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Before camp

- CDC recommends everyone 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19. People are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after last dose. Thus, individuals eligible for vaccine should get vaccinated and receive their last dose at least 2 weeks before camp start date.
- Request that campers, their families, and camp staff follow [guidance for travelers](#) before camp arrival to reduce exposure to COVID-19.
- Campers and staff should be familiar with and follow all state and local [recommendations or requirements](#) for their destination and the jurisdictions they pass through during travel.

During camp

- Upon arrival at camp, campers should be assigned to cohorts that will remain together for the entire camp session without mixing with other campers and staff in close contact circumstances, to the largest extent possible.
- For this guidance a “household cohort” means campers and staff who are staying together in a cabin, bunkhouse, or similar defined space. Household cohort members do not need to wear masks or physically distance when they are together without non-household cohort members nearby. However, campers and staff should always wear masks when together unless staff are fully vaccinated or part of the household cohort and sleep in the same space as campers. When different household cohorts are using shared indoor or outdoor spaces together during the day or night, continue to monitor and enforce [mask use](#), [physical distancing](#), and [healthy hygiene](#) behaviors for everyone, unless fully vaccinated campers and staff do not need to mask or distance per camp policy. If physical distancing can be maintained while outdoors, masks can be removed.
- For individuals who are not fully vaccinated, routine [screening testing](#) can help to identify cases of COVID-19 in asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic people, and prevent secondary transmission. [People who are fully vaccinated](#) with no COVID-19-like symptoms and no known exposure should be exempted from routine screening testing programs, if feasible.
- Staff should ventilate and clean bathrooms regularly (e.g., in the morning and evening, after times of heavy use) and if needed disinfect using an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#) [↗](#).
- Improve [ventilation](#) in [buildings](#), including cabins and dining halls, to increase air exchange and air filtration. If possible and safe, open windows, use child-safe fans to increase effectiveness of open windows, use portable air cleaners, and improve building-wide filtration.
- For campers who are not fully vaccinated and camps with a universal masking requirement, make sure that campers have more than one mask on hand so that they can easily replace a used mask with a clean one. Administrators should consider providing masks for all campers and staff or have facilities available for washing cloth masks.
- Work with camp administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like [symptoms](#) from others (See Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick in Section 5). If the camp has a nurse or other healthcare provider, they should be provided and wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including N95 respirators, and use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).
- When camp staff who are not fully vaccinated are away from camp (for example, during days off), they should [choose safer activities](#) and follow all prevention measures (e.g., masking, distance).
 - Consider having any not fully vaccinated staff do a screening test when returning after time spent away from camp.
- Develop a plan, in collaboration with appropriate state or local health officials, in the event of an outbreak. This plan should be communicated with staff, families, and campers.

Case Identification and Contact Tracing

- Camps should share plans and protocols for case identification, including testing, and contact tracing with parents and caregivers in advance. Such plans should take into consideration maintaining, to the greatest extent possible, the privacy and confidentiality of any staff or campers who may present with symptoms or test positive.
- Isolate staff or campers with symptoms immediately and refer them for [testing](#), according to camp protocol. They should remain isolated (at camp or at home) until the test result is returned. Medical care should be provided as needed.
- Camps should provide spaces for symptomatic and infected campers and staff to isolate on-site. Camps should also have procedures in place to help sick campers and staff return home safely.

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- Camp operators should notify all parents/guardians and the health department immediately following a positive test result for COVID-19, and work with local public health officials to identify close contacts as well as [quarantine](#), [testing](#), and [isolation](#) recommendations or requirements.
- Regardless of vaccination status, campers and staff should monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) for 14 days following an exposure. If they experience any symptoms, they should then isolate from others for another 10 days and/or be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including testing if indicated.
- If a person becomes sick and needs to be transported to a healthcare facility, establish procedures for safely transporting the sick person. If a camp is calling an ambulance or bringing someone to a healthcare facility, try to call first to alert the facility that the person may have COVID-19. Take steps to ensure any external community organizations that share the camp facilities follow these considerations.

After camp

- Request that campers, their families, and camp staff follow the guidance [Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#) following travel from camp.

Section 5: General Considerations for all Camps

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Camps should facilitate health-promoting behaviors such as [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#) to reduce the spread of disease.

Encourage frequent [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if soap and water are not available, use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Consider adult supervision for young children when using hand sanitizer. Encourage staff and campers to cough and sneeze into their mask or a tissue and wash their hands immediately with soap and water. When a mask or tissue is not available, people should cough or sneeze into their elbow, not their hands.

Symptom Screening and Screening Testing

For children in day camps, consider strongly encouraging a parent or caregiver to monitor their children daily at home for signs of infectious illnesses, including COVID-19. Encourage parents or caregivers to keep campers with signs or symptoms of infectious illness home when sick and/or seek medical care. Staff should self-monitor and should not report to work if they are ill. CDC's [COVID-19 self-checker](#) may be used to help decide when to seek testing or medical care for COVID-19.

For children in overnight camps, daily health checks should be completed. If feasible, the checks should be done by the same staff member who knows the child and their health status. If a camper has signs or symptoms of infectious illness, including COVID-19, the camper should isolate in a designated area and should be evaluated by camp health staff. Camps should follow appropriate contact tracing and isolation and quarantine guidance below.

Weekly screening testing of staff who are not fully vaccinated and who may oversee multiple cohorts of campers over the summer will help identify those who might be asymptotically infected to prevent further transmission. More information on screening testing in [overnight camps](#) is provided in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section of this web page.

Staying Home when Appropriate

Educate staff, campers, and their families about when they should [stay home](#) and when they can return to camp. The recommendations below are for staff and campers attending day camps. Additional information on isolation and quarantine while at overnight camp is in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section.

- CDC's criteria can help inform when staff and campers can return to camp:
 - [If they have been sick with COVID-19](#)
 - [If they have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19](#)
 - [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Camp administrators should implement several strategies in physical spaces to help maintain a healthy camp environment.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

Always follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to your facility for minimum standards for cleaning and disinfection. For more information on cleaning and disinfecting, see [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).

- Cleaning products should not be used near children and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products.

Limit Shared Objects

For young children and others who might not consistently or properly wear masks, wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and share objects

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to [clean](#).
- Keep each camper's belongings separated from others' and in individual, labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible (for example, assign art supplies or other equipment to a single camper), or limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of campers at a time and clean between uses.
- Limit sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Ventilation

Camp activities should occur outside, as much as possible. If activities are held indoors, bring as much fresh air into camp buildings as possible to help keep virus particles from concentrating inside. See [CDC's Guidance for Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#) and [Ventilation in Buildings](#).

Water Systems

The [temporary shutdown or reduced operation](#) of facilities and reductions in normal water use can create hazards for returning students, faculty, and staff. Check for hazards such as mold, *Legionella* (the bacteria that causes [Legionnaire's Disease](#)), and [lead and copper contamination](#) [↗](#) from plumbing that has corroded.

- For more information, refer to the [ASHRAE Guidance for Building Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) [📄](#) [78 KB, 3 pages] [↗](#), [CDC Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency's Information on Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use](#) [↗](#).
- If applicable, follow [CDC's considerations for Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#).

Food Service

Campers might bring their own meals and snacks to camp. However, many camps provide children with meals and snacks. Some camps may provide meals and snacks through the [United States Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program](#) [↗](#), a critical program for reducing food insecurity.

- As feasible, have children and staff who are not fully vaccinated eat meals and snacks outdoors or in well-ventilated spaces while maintaining physical distance as much as possible. Campers should store masks in a space designated for each child that is separate from others when not being worn (for example, in individual, labeled containers, bags, or cubbies) and put their mask back on when not eating or drinking. Campers and staff who are not fully vaccinated in different cohorts should remain at least 6 feet apart when eating or drinking.
- For additional recommendations on safely providing campers with meals and snacks, please see [CDC's Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19](#), [Safely Distributing School Meals During COVID-19](#), [What School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools Need to Know about COVID-19](#), and [Modifying School Spaces During Mealtimes to Reduce Spread of COVID-19](#) [📄](#) [1.38 MB, 8 pages].

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Camp administrators should implement several strategies to help maintain healthy operations.

Protections for Staff and Campers Who Are at Increased Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19

- Strongly encourage camp staff, including staff who are age 12 years and older, to get fully vaccinated as soon as the opportunity is available to reduce the risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, and help reduce risk of spreading COVID-19 to other staff and campers. People at increased risk of severe illness might need to take [extra precautions](#).
- Offer modified job responsibilities for your staff at [higher risk for severe illness](#) (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk.
- Offer accommodations modifications and assistance options to campers at higher risk for severe illness that limit exposure risk (e.g., virtual learning opportunities).
- Establish policies that protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness because of underlying medical conditions.

Regulatory Awareness

- Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.

Sports and Athletic Activities

People who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting including while participating in sports, except where required by laws, rules, or regulations. Due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, and staff who are not fully vaccinated at increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Close contact and indoor sports are particularly risky.



When possible, sports and athletic activities should be done outdoors. Campers who are not fully vaccinated should avoid playing close-contact or indoor sports. If campers will be engaging in close-contact or indoor sports, reduce risk by encouraging vaccination as soon as eligible and by wearing a mask, playing outside, and staying at least 6 feet away from others. Camps may consider using [screening testing](#) for not fully vaccinated young athletes and adults (e.g., coaches, trainers) who support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission and adopt additional [prevention strategies for youth sports](#).

Camp Activities

- Campers and staff who are not fully vaccinated, should avoid group events, gatherings, or meetings where physical distancing between people cannot be maintained. Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Unless they are fully vaccinated, limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible, including for [sporting events](#).
- If taking trips outside the camp, it is safer for campers and staff who are not fully vaccinated to visit outdoor locations, away from other people. Some examples include hiking trips and visits to beaches or lakes. If taking trips to indoor locations, campers and staff who are not fully vaccinated should stay within their cohort, wear a mask, and maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet from anyone outside of the cohort.
- Activities that have the potential to produce respiratory droplets including singing, chanting, shouting, or playing a wind instrument should be done outdoors if possible. Campers and staff, who are not fully vaccinated, should wear masks and maintain at least 6 feet physical distance during these activities.

Communication Strategies

Signs and Messages

- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (for example, camp entrances, dining areas, restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measures](#)  [289 KB, 2 pages] and describe how to [stop the spread](#)  [467 KB, 1 page] of germs such as by [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a mask](#).
- Provide regular [announcements](#) to campers and staff that reinforce ways to reduce spread of COVID-19.

- Include messages (for example, [videos](#)) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families (such as on camp websites, in emails, and through camp [social media accounts](#)).
- Tailor information so that it is easily understood by various audiences and is available in multiple [languages](#) and [accessible formats](#) [↗](#) (for example, braille or larger print). Find free CDC print and digital communication resources [here](#).
- Find free CDC print and digital resources on [CDC’s communications resources](#) main page.

Physical Guides

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and campers who are not fully vaccinated remain distanced in lines and at other times.

Communication Systems

- Put communication systems in place for
 - Having staff, campers, and families self-report to the camp administrators and COVID-19 point of contact if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with [health information sharing regulations for COVID-19](#) (See “[Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts](#)” in the [Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick](#) section below) [↗](#) and other applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations. People who are [fully vaccinated](#) can refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic.
 - Notifying staff and families of camp closures and restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (for example, limited hours of operation).
 - Notifying parents if campers or minor staff members become ill or require quarantine.
 - Communicating with school districts if the camp is providing services to children with disabilities pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
 - Identifying if the child with an IEP or a staff member who provides services pursuant to an IEP will be out for an extended period of time and determine if the school district needs to provide alternative services for the child.

Leave (Time Off) Policies

- Implement flexible, supportive sick leave policies and practices that enable employees and volunteers to stay home if they are sick, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are [caring for someone who is sick](#). Develop and communicate with staff and families policies for return-to-camp after COVID-19 illness. CDC’s [criteria to discontinue home isolation and quarantine](#) can inform these policies. See CDC’s guidance for [businesses and workplaces](#) for more information.

Staffing Plans

- Ensure adequate staffing to support implementation of prevention strategies.
- Monitor absenteeism of campers and staff, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff.

Staff Training

- Train staff on all safety protocols and COVID-19 prevention strategies, including cleaning and disinfection.
- Conduct training virtually or ensure that [physical distancing](#) is maintained during training.

Sharing Facilities

- Encourage any organizations that share or use the camp facilities to also follow this guidance and limit shared use, if feasible.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Camp administrators should implement several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

Follow Recommendations for [Isolation, Quarantine, and Testing for Campers and Staff who have been Fully Vaccinated](#)

Isolating and Transporting Children and Staff Who Have Symptoms While at Camp

- Campers or staff might have COVID-19 symptoms while at camp. Administrators should [take action to isolate](#) people who begin to have these symptoms from other children and staff. Plan to have an isolation room or an area, preferably with access to a separate restroom, that can be used to isolate a sick camper or staff member. Ensure that isolated children are still under adult supervision. Arrange safe transportation home or to a healthcare facility (if severe symptoms) for the camper or staff member.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#) them; this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable.
- Within the first 24 hours after the sick person has been in the space, wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before cleaning and disinfecting. Before cleaning and disinfecting, improve [ventilation](#) by opening doors and windows, using fans, and/or using heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) settings to increase air circulation.
- Ensure [safe and proper use of cleaners and disinfectants](#), including wearing adequate personal protective equipment and storing products securely away from children.
- More information on isolating and transporting children and staff while at overnight camp is in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section.

Advise People of Home Isolation Recommendations

- Staff members or campers with COVID-19 should not return to camp until they have met CDC's [recommendations to discontinue home isolation](#). Once they have met all the CDC criteria for ending isolation, then no additional testing is needed to return to the facility.
- In most instances, people who have had COVID-19 can be around others after
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared or a positive test, and
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
- More information on isolation and quarantine while at overnight camp is in the [Additional Guidance for Overnight Camps](#) section.

Notify Health Officials and Advise Close Contacts of Quarantine Recommendations

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, camp administrators should notify [local health officials](#), staff, and families of campers immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with applicable law.
- Work closely with local health officials to conduct [contact tracing](#) to identify people who might have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to [quarantine, self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. [People who are fully vaccinated](#) who are asymptomatic can refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure.

Support Coping and Resilience

- Communicate openly with camp staff about changes in camp activities and procedures. Ask staff for input in decisions about new processes and procedures to increase staff's sense of control and to reduce their anxiety.
- Train all staff on recognizing signs of emotional distress and trauma and [coping with stress](#).
- Encourage staff to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news or stories about COVID-19, including social media, if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- Encourage staff and campers to eat healthfully, exercise, get adequate sleep, and find time to unwind.
- Discuss and share stress reduction strategies such as mindfulness practices, social support, and deep breathing.
- Encourage staff and campers to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
- Consider posting signs that encourage campers to reach out to staff or people they trust if they are feeling distressed. Ensure staff have information for SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline: call or text 1-800-985-5990.

- Encourage staff to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or if they are [feeling overwhelmed with emotions](#), such as sadness, depression, anxiety; or call 911 if they feel like they want to harm themselves or others.

Communication Resources



Did You Wash Your Hands? (Poster)
 Help campers do their part and stop COVID-19 in its tracks. [English](#) [3 MB, 1 page] [Spanish](#) [3 MB, 1 page]



Tell An Adult If You Feel Sick (Poster)
 Encourage campers to tell an adult if they feel sick. [Download](#) [3 MB, 1 page]



Camp Rules for People Not Fully Vaccinated (Poster)
 Campers badges of honor for stopping the spread of COVID-19. [English](#) [3 MB, 1 page] [Spanish](#) [3 MB, 1 page]

Related Pages


- › [COVID-19 Basics](#)
- › [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- › [Latest COVID-19 Information](#)
- › [Managing Stress and Coping](#)
- › [People at Increased Risk](#)
- › [Children and COVID-19](#)
- › [Talking with children about](#)
- › [Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- › [What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart](#)
- › [For Camp Administrators and Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)
- › [Guidance for Schools and Child Care Centers](#)
- › [Guidance for Direct Service Providers, Parents, Caregivers, and Guardians, and People with Developmental and Behavioral Disorders](#)
- › [Considerations for Outdoor Learning Gardens and Community Gardens](#)
- › [Guidance for What School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools Need to Know about COVID-19](#)

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Previous Updates

Updates from Previous Content 

As of April 24, 2021

- Updated background for what is known about COVID-19 and transmission among children and in summer camp settings
- Added vaccination information
- Updated guidance on physical distancing
- Updated guidance on camp activities, including sports and athletic activities
- Updated considerations for screening testing and contact tracing

- Updated guidance on cleaning and disinfection
 - Removed guidance on physical barriers
 - Updated guidance on developing emergency operations plans
 - Updated guidance on ventilation and water systems
 - Updated guidance for communal spaces, food service, playgrounds and play space
 - Updated guidance for overnight camps
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