



Public Information Release

School and Sports During a Pandemic

August 18, 2020

As students start returning to their classrooms, we will reach a new milestone in the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools started remote learning as an early response to stop the spread when the world was first learning about this novel virus. Our local schools have implemented many safety standards and precautions to keep students safe, but it is up to the community to make safe personal choices.

“The health of our entire community relies on each and every individual making good personal choices,” explains Health Commissioner Chris Cook. “Schools and sports are important, but the success in keeping those activities running for more than a few weeks is up to how well we contain the virus. School staff and coaches are doing a great job protecting students, but they are not the only difference makers. It is up to all of us including businesses, families, and friends.”

Cook noted that the virus spreads rapidly indoors. For cases in the general population of Madison County, that excludes inmates and nursing homes, 45% of positive cases have infected at least one other individual in their household. “This means if you get sick, you have almost a 50/50 shot at passing it to someone else in your household,” stated Cook. “If we let our guard down with our social circles it affects those we care about most.”

On August 18th Governor DeWine and Ohio State University’s Dr. Borchers discussed how critical healthy communities with low infection rates are to continue sports. When each individual avoids unnecessary gatherings, washes their hands, and wears a mask, the community can make greater strides forward with sports or in-person school. All of these prevention activities lead to better physical and mental health outcomes.

People are most likely to infect others two days before they have symptoms. There are some infected people who never have symptoms but can spread it to others. This means when a seemingly healthy person talks, laughs, sings, or coughs they could be infecting many people who are in close contact. Research has proven that, until we have a vaccine, the most effective way to lower overall risk is to combine facial coverings with social distancing – not one or the other.

“Layering all protective actions that we have reduces the risk of COVID-19 spreading and gives us the best chance to keep our schools open and sports going,” said Cook. “If we act like it’s over, we will realize all too soon that it’s just getting started.”

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We are committed to monitoring and responding to our community's health and wellness needs through innovative services, education, collaboration, and compassionate care.