Playing it safe after COVID

How athletes and exercise enthusiasts can get back in the game

Intense exercise can place added strain on the heart. Also, COVID-19 can affect the heart and lungs. So after you’ve had COVID, be sure to:

- Ease back into activity – all athletes should be fully recovered from COVID before returning to exercise or sports
- Report any symptoms
- If you have heart or lung symptoms, get heart testing before exercising or playing sports

WATCh for heart symptoms

These include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Palpitations or feeling your heart racing
- Heart rate that stays high after activity

Rarely, myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) can occur after COVID-19.

Initial heart tests

- Electrocardiogram (ECG) To assess the heart’s electrical activity
- Echocardiogram To see how the heart is functioning
- Cardiac troponin Blood test to look for heart muscle injury

If any of these tests suggest a heart issue, an MRI of the heart and other tests may be added.

When to return to activity

After you’ve had COVID:

With no symptoms: 3 days
With symptoms: 10 days
With myocarditis: 3-6 months

Always check in with your health care team and share concerns you may have.

Visit CardioSmart.org/COVID19 to learn more.

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