

Could my provider at Pediatric Services write a letter to exempt my child from wearing a mask while playing sports?

We are here to help you stay healthy and safe during the COVID19 pandemic. We support the executive order that mandates a mask be worn while indoors in public places, even while playing sports. The following is from the lung specialists who take care of the more severe asthmatic patients in this State at Children's Respiratory and Critical Care Specialists (CRCCS):

The best available evidence shows that wearing a mask in public reduces the spread of COVID19 and also offers some protection to the wearer. In addition, studies have shown that oxygen and carbon dioxide levels remain stable among people wearing masks. It is very unlikely for oxygen levels to decrease or carbon dioxide levels to rise while wearing the type of masks recommended by the CDC. In general, people including those with asthma, both young and old, are not at risk of trouble breathing by wearing facial coverings. Therefore, the providers and nurses at **CRCCS will not provide mask exemption letters.**

Part of being on a team is defending and protecting your teammates. One of the best ways that athletes can do that is to wear a mask or [cloth face coverings](#) for most sports to reduce the [risk](#) of spreading the virus that causes [COVID-19](#).

The most common reason that people have trouble with masks are the material or fit of the mask. You may have to try different options to find the best mask for you or your child. When choosing a mask it does not have to be tight-fitting. Many can wear a loose-fitting mask that covers the nose and mouth, but does not fall off. It should not be so tight around the ears and neck that it makes breathing uncomfortable. A loose-fitting mask does not really protect the wearer, but does decrease spread of respiratory droplets and protects others. While we do not endorse any particular brand of mask, we have heard from some patients that the Under Armour sports mask works well. We have also heard that silicone mask cages/brackets that pull the mask away from the face are helpful. For hockey players CCM has developed their "Game on mask" for improved airflow and less condensation.

Wearing a mask for extended periods of time can be uncomfortable for anyone. Have your child practice wearing it while doing drills or playing their sport before the season starts. If the cloth face covering is removed for a break, the athlete should remain at least 6 feet away from all other individuals.

Some additional tips about masks during sports:

Have a special place to store the mask - your child might keep it in the same spot in their sports bag when they are not wearing it.

Keep it clean - Just like you should sanitize sports equipment before and after each use, wash cloth face coverings daily in hot water. Do not reuse cloth face coverings until they have been cleaned.

Set a good example - Coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators should also protect themselves and others by always wearing cloth face coverings. By doing this, they are also setting a good example for young athletes.

Remember- Wearing cloth face coverings whenever possible and safe helps young athletes protect their teammates, themselves, and is the best protection to allow the sports season to continue without pandemic interruption as happened to the football teams last fall.