



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Department of Athletics

# DCPS ATHLETICS COVID-19

## Health and Safety

## Return to Play Plan

Updated February 9, 2022 – subject to change



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

District of Columbia Public School Athletics will continue to work in collaboration with the District of Columbia State Athletic Association(DCSAA) and follow guidelines and recommendations as set forth by the DC Department of Health(DOH), Executive Orders issued by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education(OSSE), the Centers of Disease Control and Preventions(CDC), and National Federation of State High School Associations(NFHS) in order to keep our student-athletes safe. All outlined guidance must be adhered to while participating in workouts, practices, and competition. DCPS Athletics will focus on the health and safety of all staff, student-athletes and families and have developed guidance built specifically for education-based athletic programs.

The guidance and other recommendations established here outlines protocols for the DCPS Athletics Health and Safety Return to Play Plan (the “Plan”), which includes a return to full engagement of in-person student-athlete workouts, practices, and competitions at school sites under the direction of school Athletic Directors, DCPS-certified coaches, and DCPS-certified athletic trainers. This plan focuses on established return to play guidance for indoor and outdoor athletic spaces to include facilities cleaning, health screenings and participation protocols. The guidance in this document applies to all stakeholders, including school athletic directors, coaches, student-athletes and their families and athletic trainers as workouts, practices and competitions begin for the SY21-22 athletic season.

Everyone involved must follow the RTP Plan guidelines described here for interscholastic athletic programs for a safe return to play. The RTP document details important protocols and guidance to ensure a safe and healthy athletic environment

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## **Participants and Stakeholders**

To begin, participation in in-person activities is optional for all participants and stakeholders, including coaches. All students who have completed the participation process and are eligible per DCPS eligibility guidelines will be permitted to participate. **Additionally, beginning the fall 2021 sports season only in-person instruction students are eligible to participate in in-person athletic activities.**

### **Additionally, the following considerations apply:**

Student-athletes and staff at high risk for experiencing severe illness due to COVID-19 consult with their medical provider before participating in any conditioning, skill development, practice, or competition. This includes people with:

- Cancer
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- COPD
- Immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant
- Obesity & Severe Obesity
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Smoking
- Type II Diabetes Mellitus

Any child or staff member who has a medical condition not on this list but is still concerned about their safety.

## **Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19**

Individuals with COVID-19 have experienced a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- As stated on the CDC website, this list does not include all possible symptoms; the CDC will continue to update this list as needed.

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### **DCPS Certified Athletic Trainers**

To assist with the implementation of the DCPS Athletics RTP Plan, certified Athletic Trainers (ATCs) will return to high schools. ATCs will assist with the check-in and participation of student-athletes and assist Athletics Directors, coaches, and staff members with the implementation and supervision of the return to in-person operations.

### **Required Participation Forms**

All students participating in in-person activities, as part of the DCPS Athletics program, must submit all required documentation. Participation forms can be done electronically through using the links below and/or <https://www.thedciaa.com/participation-forms> . Students and parents/guardians who have difficulty with registration should contact the school Athletic Director.

#### **Participation Forms**

All students must complete a participation packet every school year. Additionally, the medical forms must be completed within the prior 365 days. We encourage you to have your healthcare provider complete these forms before the school year and attach them to your participation packet.

- [HS Participation Packet](#)
- [MS/ES Participation Packet](#)
- [Universal Health Certificate \(UHC\)](#). Students with certain medical conditions may also need to complete an [Asthma Action Plan](#) or an [Anaphylaxis Action Plan](#)

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for Coaches and Student-Athletes**

Students and coaches are subject to the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination mandate outlined in [Mayor's Order 2021-109](#). For more information, please visit [COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate | thedciaa](#) or contact your school based Athletic Director.

### **Operating Procedures**

The following operating procedures provide additional guidance that will maximize operations to allow for the greatest level of student-athlete engagement.

The following operating procedures apply:

**1. Participation** – all students must complete participation forms for in-person athletic activities in advance and be deemed eligible prior to engagement.

**2. Face Masks/Coverings** - Individuals shall correctly wear a face mask/covering when required [COVID-19 DC Health Guidance For Schools 11.24.2021](#).

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**3. Indoor and Outdoor Activities** – Full team athletic activities (conditioning, skill development, workouts) may occur on high school campuses, both indoors and outside.

**Outdoor Activity**

- Face coverings must be worn at all times unless the student-athlete is engaged in physical activity during workouts, practices, or competitions.
- Coaches, athletic trainers, officials, spectators, athletic personnel, and all staff must wear face coverings at all times outdoors.
- Cloth face coverings are acceptable.
- Face coverings must not be shared.
- Plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during athletic participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others

**Indoor Activity**

- Student-athletes should refer to the [COVID-19 DC Health Guidance For Schools 11.24.2021](#) regarding the use of masks for indoor activities.
- Coaches, athletic trainers, officials, spectators, and athletic personnel must always wear masks indoors
- Cloth face coverings are acceptable.
- Face coverings must not be shared.
- Plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during athletic participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others

**Weight Rooms**

- Face coverings must be worn at all times in weight rooms
- Equipment and workout spaces must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

**4. Hygiene** - hand hygiene is essential. In addition to handwashing, participants must wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items of surfaces

- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.
- The use of face coverings while in public is required

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5. **Hydration/Food** - all participants must bring their own water bottle that includes their name clearly labeled. Students are encouraged to bring a gallon of water to each session or contest. Sharing of water bottles is strictly prohibited. Food should not be shared. No water = No workout
  
  6. **Gradual Return to Athletics** - students have had a prolonged break from organized sports and conditioning. Although some students may have continued independent strength and conditioning and cardiovascular training, some athletes may return deconditioned. Coaches need to assess the physical conditioning status of all athletes on their return and plan for a graduated return in duration, frequency, and intensity of athletics. To provide equity and equal access, it is suggested that coaches be mindful of students' physical conditioning during the team selection process, given that many individuals may not have had access to safe, appropriate conditioning opportunities during the pandemic
  
  7. **Social Distancing Protocols** – the following will be implemented to promote social distancing:
    - A minimum of 3 feet should be kept between all participants, to the extent possible
    - When feasible, increase distancing to at least 10-12 feet if shouting, yelling or heavy breathing, as forceful exhalation can increase aerosol volume and distance
    - Use of larger, well-ventilated facilities for activities
    - No direct person-to-person contact (touching) when spotting for weight training – use safety spotter arms or straps where feasible and safe
    - No handshakes or fist bumps
    - No team huddles
    - No spitting or sunflower seeds, tobacco, phlegm
  
  8. **Facilities/Cleaning (Appendix 1)** – bathrooms and facilities will be cleaned per DCPS protocol and procedures by building services staff. Social distancing protocols shall be implemented at all times, including entrance and exit strategies. Cleaning schedules will be created and implemented for all athletic facilities.
    - Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility will be disinfected (weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.) before and after each workout session.
    - Individuals will be directed to wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
    - Hand sanitizing stations will be available to individuals as they transition locations.

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- Once usage is allowed, DCPS staff will thoroughly disinfect the weight equipment before and after an individual's use of equipment.
  - Appropriate clothing/shoes will be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
  - Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam will be covered or disqualified for use by DCPS staff.
  - After participation, students should return home and immediately shower and wash their workout clothing. Locker room showers will not be available until further notice.

**9. Equipment** – All shared equipment must be disinfected before and after use per DCPS cleaning protocols with DCPS-approved products. Use wipes on all equipment/bars/benches before and after use.

#### **10. Student-Athlete Preparation**

In order to participate in in-person athletic activities, students need to be prepared. As part of preparation for activities, students must have the following (all clearly marked with the student's name):

- Mask
- Hand Sanitizer
- Water Bottle
- Towel

#### **11. Student-Athlete Summer Workout Eligibility**

Student-athletes must submit all required participation documentation and be deemed eligible to participate before engaging in athletic activity. Athletic Directors and coaches must create an off-season workout roster in the DCPS Athletics QuickBase System.

**12. Emergency Plan** - for all activities, schools shall implement an emergency plan, in the event of inclement weather or other emergency, that provides a large and appropriate space for students and participants to safely relocate with appropriate physical distancing (such as a gymnasium or cafeteria). Schools must also ensure access to AED units.

Additionally, please be reminded of the DCIAA Thunder & Lightning Policy included below in the event of inclement weather.



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**8.11.4 Thunder & Lightning Policy.** The DCIAA rule is – “SEE IT or HEAR IT, CLEAR IT immediately!” If lightning is seen or thunder is heard, the activity shall be stopped, the outside venue shall be cleared immediately, and athletes shall be safely sheltered. The athletic department shall be contacted once all individuals are safely sheltered.

**8.11.5.1 Evacuation Sites.** SAFE Evacuation Sites include fully enclosed metal vehicles/buses with windows closed or substantial buildings. UNSAFE Lightning Shelter Areas include all outdoor metal objects like flag poles, fences, and gates, high mast light poles, metal bleachers, golf carts, machinery, etc. AVOID trees, water, open fields and high ground.

**13. Note Regarding School Club Athletic Teams -** While DCPS does not administer club athletic teams, coaches and student-athletes must comply with all regulations and standards listed in the DCPS Return to Play guide and follow the appropriate outlined phased-in approach.

**14. Spectators/Fans – Spectators are allowed at Athletic Events**

- Spectators must comply with the face covering expectations
- Spectators must wear mask at all times – Indoors and Outdoor
- Two (2) guests are allowed per student participant

**15. Concessions Stands – Concession stand operation is allowed during athletic events**

- Ensure the concession stand is adequately stocked with paper towels, hand sanitizer and supplies for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting
- Menu options: Only prepackaged foods and drinks can be sold
- Use gloves, clean and sanitize high touch surfaces frequently
- Ensure spacing between customers while in line for service – signage, floor/ground markings.
- If possible, encourage one-way traffic flow
- Consider barriers such as clear plastic between concession stand workers and volunteers

**16. Transportation**

- Masks must be worn at all times by coaches and student-athletes while being transported to and from contests

**17. Athletics Related Travel –** Teams can travel for athletic related contest, but no overnights trips can occur.

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**18. Future Updates** - While conditions are ever-changing in regard to COVID-19, updates regarding DCPS athletics activities will be provided as available and posted on the DCIAA webpage, under the COVID-19 tab. The DCIAA will continue to meet during the implementation of in-person activities to receive feedback from stakeholders and incorporate the latest information and guidance into program operations. The ongoing evaluation of the Return to Play Guide will occur throughout the pandemic.

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## **DCPS COVID-19 Protocols**

Please refer to [Health & Safety - DCPS Reopen Strong](#) for information regarding DCPS COVID-19 protocols.

- Healthy Routines at Home
- Stronger and Safer Together Pledge
- Health and Safety Measure for the 2021-2022 School Year
- COVID-19 Reporting Protocols
- Close Contact and Quarantine Guidance
- COVID-19 Vaccine Availability
- Best Practices

### **Student-athletes Return to Participation Protocol (RTPP)**

Please understand for your child’s safety, he/she will remain out of participation until they have been cleared by an appropriate medical provider (MD, DO, NP) and completes the RTPP. Returning a student-athlete before this happens may predispose them to another type of injury.

To begin the Return to Play Protocol (RTPP) it may be recommended that the patient have a normal ECG.

Medical clearance is required for any individual that has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis or is quarantined for possible COVID-19.

#### **Return to Participation Protocol**

- A graduated stepwise return to participation protocol will be implemented. The detailed return to participation protocol can be found in the Appendix.

	<u>R</u> <u>T</u>	<u>Description</u>	
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<b>Return to Participation Protocol Following a COVID-19 Diagnosis and/or Quarantine</b>	<u>P</u> <u>P</u> <u>h</u> <u>a</u> <u>s</u> <u>e</u>	
	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-athlete has been symptom free for 10 days</li> <li>• ECG Performed (if prescribed by the doctor or preferred by parent)</li> <li>• Cleared by physician</li> <li>• Activities of daily living</li> <li>• Student-athlete completes above criteria without excessive fatigue or breathlessness</li> </ul>
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-athlete is symptom free</li> <li>• 15 minutes of aerobic exercise (walking, light jogging, stationary cycle, no resistance training) at &lt;70% of MHR</li> <li>• Student-athlete completes above criteria without</li> </ul>

		excessive fatigue or breathlessness	
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-athlete is symptom free</li> <li>• 30-45 minutes of moderate activity (e.g. simple movement activities such as running drills) at &lt;80% of MHR</li> <li>• Student-athlete completes above criteria without excessive fatigue or breathlessness</li> </ul>	
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-athlete is symptom free</li> <li>• 45-60 minutes of sports specific aerobic activity (including warm up) at &lt;80% of MHR</li> <li>• Student-athlete completes above criteria without excessive fatigue or breathlessness</li> </ul>	
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-athlete is symptom free</li> <li>• Return to play with no restrictions</li> <li>• Student-athlete completes above</li> </ul>	



		<p>criteria without excessive fatigue or breathlessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return to play with no restrictions</li></ul>	
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## APPENDIX 1

### **Athletic Training Facilities Guidelines (Cleaning, Social Distancing, Signage Policies)**

#### **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

##### **A. Athletic Training Room**

1. All Athletic Trainers will perform routine cleaning and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This includes but is not limited to doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, tables, etc.
2. Athletic training room treatment tables, taping tables, equipment, etc. will be disinfected after each student athlete is treated.
3. Disinfecting and cleaning will follow CDC and DC Health guidelines. (Products will be applied and left on surfaces according to their recommendations.) Only products meeting EPA and CDC guidelines will be used.
4. Athletic Trainers will properly wash their hands after treating each athlete. Student-athletes will also be required to wash their hands per CDC recommendations.
5. Hand Sanitizer will be readily available.
6. All areas of the AT Room will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

##### **B. Weight Room**

1. Weight benches and equipment will be cleaned by the coach after each student-athlete use and between uses.
2. The size of the weight room will dictate how many student-athletes can be in there at a given time based on social distance guidelines of 6 feet. This will vary from school to school and may require equipment rearrangement. The equipment not in use should be clearly marked stating that use is prohibited.
3. Shirts, Shorts, and appropriate closed toe shoes should be worn, or students may not participate. (No uncovered girdles, spandex, sports bras, or bare skin.)
4. The weight room should be thoroughly disinfected by the coach prior to the next group of students entering. There will be a 15-minute block for disinfecting between groups.
5. Any equipment, pads, etc. with holes must be properly covered prior to use or it should be disqualified for use.

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6. Student-athletes must wash/sanitize their hands frequently.
  7. When student-athletes are permitted to lift with spotters, the spotters will spot on the ends and will wear face masks.
  8. The weight room will be cleaned daily by the school custodial engineers.

#### **SOCIAL DISTANCING/ PPE**

1. DC Health mandates that masks must remain on while on school property.
2. Masks and other PPE equipment will be worn by the Athletic Trainers at all times.
3. Refer to the [COVID-19 DC Health Guidance For Schools 11.24.2021](#) for student use of masks for indoor activities.
4. Coaches must wear face masks at all times. Artificial noise makers/alternative signals are encouraged to be utilized in place of traditional whistles.
5. Social Distancing of 6 feet will be required in the Athletic Training Room as well as in the designated waiting area, such as the hallway. Signage reminders will be posted.
6. Athletic Trainers will place an "X" on the floor every six feet outside of their Athletic Training Room with tape (duct, athletic, masking, etc.) to indicate where waiting student-athletes should stand.
7. Each Athletic Trainer will determine how many student-athletes can be treated at once in their room based on social distance guidelines of 6 feet. This will vary from school to school as well as various treatment areas and may require furniture/equipment rearrangement. Those tables/stations not in use should be clearly marked with signage stating that use is prohibited.
8. Student-athletes may not congregate in the Athletic Training Room/waiting areas/hallways.
9. Student-athletes are strongly encouraged to maintain social distancing to and from workouts.
10. Designated entrances and exits will be in place to limit traffic and eliminate commingling.



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## **ATHLETIC TRAINING ROOM and FACILITIES GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

1. Athletes will be seen by appointment only. Except for emergencies. Social distancing will remain in effect in an emergency.
2. Physical contact such as high-fives, fist bumps, and hugs are not permitted.
3. Whenever possible we will utilize telehealth to limit the number of exposures. (See telehealth guidelines for directives).
4. If student-athletes are waiting outside for their scheduled appointment, they must stand on an "X" to ensure appropriate social distancing.
5. Signage will be displayed in multiple locations, regarding social distancing, hand washing, and mask wearing.
6. Student-athletes, coaches and staff must have their own filled water bottle and personal water supply. No sharing allowed. No filled water bottle = No workout!
7. Coaches must wear face masks at all times and are discouraged from using traditional whistles inside or outside. Artificial noise makers/clock buzzers/alternative signals may be utilized instead.
8. Proper hygiene is to be practiced by the student-athletes. Post-participation, student-athletes should immediately return home to shower. Student-athletes should wear clean workout clothes each day. Student-athletes should not share equipment or articles of clothing.
9. The following are prohibited: eating, spitting, chewing gum, and sharing equipment.
10. There are to be no additional people in the venue besides the pod participants and the coach. (The Athletic Trainer and Athletic Director are excluded and permitted) No Spectators/Family!

### **SIGNAGE**

1. Signage (from the CDC) with regards to hand washing, wearing masks, social distancing will be posted.
2. A telehealth infographic and the contact information of the Athletic Trainer will also be posted.



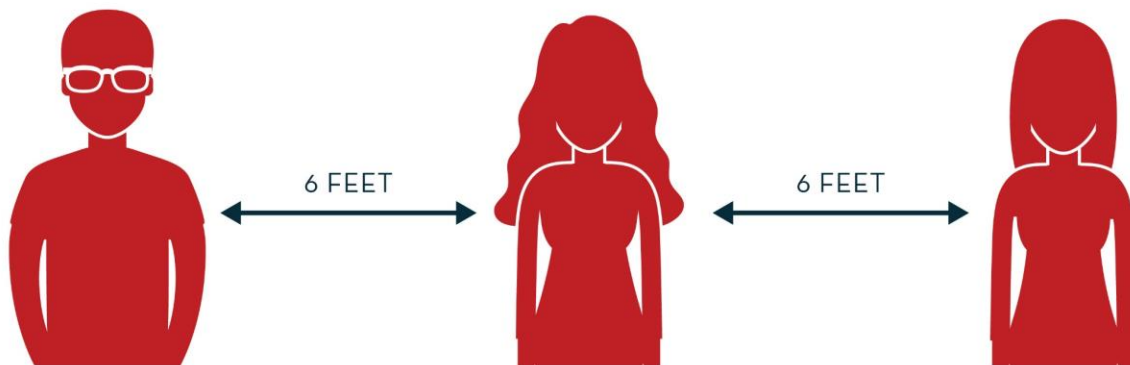
## APPENDIX 2

# SOCIAL DISTANCING

**HAVE TO GO OUT?** Keep 6 feet of distance between you and others whenever possible.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?** It can help limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**WHAT IS IT?** Remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding large crowds & gatherings.



[CORONAVIRUS.DC.GOV](https://coronavirus.dc.gov)



**DC HEALTH**  
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**WE ARE** GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
**DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR**



APPENDIX 3

# Slow the Spread of COVID-19

**WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN**

**20 SECONDS**

**WHEN OUT WITH YOUR FRIENDS, WEAR A MASK**

**AND STAY 6 FEET APART FROM OTHERS**

**CLEAN FREQUENTLY TOUCHED OBJECTS**

**DO NOT TOUCH YOUR EYES, NOSE, AND MOUTH**

**COVER YOUR COUGHS AND SNEEZES**

**STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK**

**cdc.gov/coronavirus**

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Resources:

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Schools (Preschool-K-12 and Adult Education) DC DOH

[https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page\\_content/attachments/COVID-19\\_DC\\_Health\\_Guidance\\_For-Schools-Reopening\\_2020-08-05.pdf](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page_content/attachments/COVID-19_DC_Health_Guidance_For-Schools-Reopening_2020-08-05.pdf)

<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing>

<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/mayor's-order-2020-081-requirement-self-quarantine-after-non-essential-travel-during-covid-19>

[COVID-19 DC Health Guidance For Schools 11.24.2021](#)

[Health & Safety - DCPS Reopen Strong](#)

*From the DC department of health –*

*Schools must perform a daily health screen for all students and staff entering the building. An individual with any of the following symptoms must not enter the school, and instead they must isolate immediately and call their healthcare provider: Fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell. Symptoms can be evaluated before arrival (via phone or app), or upon arrival and can be based on report from caregivers. For Screening Tool Guidance, visit [coronavirus.dc.gov/health\\_guidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/health_guidance). If a student or staff member develops any of the symptoms above during the school day, the school must have a process in place that allows them to isolate until it is safe to go home and seek healthcare provider guidance.*