

# Special Olympics COVID-19 Guidance

Version August 2nd, 2024

**LOCAL REGULATIONS SHOULD SERVE AS YOUR PRIMARY COVID-19 GUIDANCE SOURCE**

Special Olympics prioritizes the health and safety of athletes, coaches, volunteers and all other members of the Special Olympics community. As a movement for and by people with intellectual disabilities (ID), this COVID-19 guidance is inclusive and tailored to their unique needs, based upon CDC and WHO regulations as of July 2024. These regulations can be found at: ( [World Organization \(WHO\)](#), [NCIRD | CDC](#) and [CDC Updates Vaccine Recommendations | NCIRD | CDC](#)).

**As some people with ID are at greater risk of complications from infectious diseases including COVID 19, Special Olympics recommends that all participants<sup>1</sup> be fully vaccinated<sup>2</sup> and up to date with COVID-19 vaccine boosters and annual flu vaccines when available.**

If participants contract COVID-19 they should stay home until symptoms improve and they are fever-free for 24 hours without medication. After resuming activities, participants should take added precautions for five (5) days, including wearing masks, maintaining distance, and enhancing hand hygiene ([CDC](#)). This applies to all in-person programmatic activities such as sports training and competitions, Young Athletes (YA), Healthy Athletes (HA), Program-hosted Unified Champion Schools events, Athlete Leadership and volunteer meetings/training.

Please note that local, state/provincial/territorial, or national or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations should serve as a primary guide for ensuring a safe environment for all participants. Circumstances may occasionally necessitate Special Olympics and Special Olympics Programs to implement more rigorous mitigative measures in order to better ensure the health and safety of participants.

*Special Olympics Programs: this document supersedes prior published Special Olympics guidance on the topic. However, in the event of a re-emergence of COVID-19 prevalence, we encourage Programs to review the suggested mitigative measures found in Special Olympics' December 2022 guidance document. Contact your SOI Regional office or SOI for a copy.*

Special Olympics Programs (Programs) are encouraged to designate a COVID-19 response person to assist with guidance and compliance, coordinate responses, monitor cases, and consult legal counsel for any liability concerns. This guidance is not a substitute for professional medical or public health advice, diagnosis, legal advice or treatment. Special Olympics makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this advice. Medical professionals and public health officials should be consulted for specific questions related to COVID-19 or any other public health matters.

**NOTE :\*\*\*This guidance is subject to change at any time to reflect new recommendations or regulations,**

For participants with questions about this guidance, please contact your Program office. For Programs with questions, please contact your local Regional Office or Special Olympics, Inc. at [medicalops@specialolympics.org](mailto:medicalops@specialolympics.org). For Regions with questions, please contact [medicalops@specialolympics.org](mailto:medicalops@specialolympics.org) and contact [legal@specialolympics.org](mailto:legal@specialolympics.org) with any legal concerns. Additional resources concerning COVID-19 can be found on the following website [Special Olympics Resources website for COVID-19](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Participants” are defined as all athletes, Unified partners, coaches, officials, volunteers, family members, caregivers, staff, honoured guests or others in attendance of an activity (e.g., spectators).

<sup>2</sup> Fully vaccinated: This status applies to a participant when they have received all recommended doses in their primary COVID-19 vaccine series (the second dose in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine primary series or one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine primary series). COVID-19 boosters of the vaccines are recommended as immunity reduces over time and by accessing your booster when offer you will keep your protection against COVID-19 at its optimum level.