



SAFEGUARDING HEART HEALTH

GUIDANCE FOR PHYSICIANS ON YOUNG ATHLETES & COVID-19

Team sports came to a halt in early 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but now, with safety guidelines in place to protect young players, sports have resumed in many areas. As you provide care for young student athletes, UK HealthCare's Pediatric Heart team can serve as your partners in care.

Heart health is a concern

Because COVID-19 is so new, its lasting impacts on health are still unknown. One area of concern, particularly with athletes because of physical exertion, is heart health. While our Congenital Heart team supports youth sports because of the positive affect they have on cardiac health, we also want to ensure that young people who have had COVID-19 are heart healthy before they return to the playing field. Our team of pediatric cardiologists can consult with you and evaluate these young patients.

Clearing kids to play again

To ensure that young athletes who have had COVID-19 safely return to sports, experts advise that they be seen and cleared by their physician. In most mild

or asymptomatic cases, youth should be able to resume physical activity after at least 14 days of rest and quarantine. In severe cases, a more thorough evaluation, including tests and a consult with a pediatric cardiologist, is advised.

Chart provides guidance

We've included a simple flow chart (back page) that outlines recommended steps in treating young athletes who have had COVID-19 or who have recently tested positive. The chart is based on recommendations from trusted resources (see below). The chart covers when tests should be ordered; what tests should be ordered; when a referral to a pediatric heart specialist should be made; timelines for follow-up appointments; and recommended rest periods before athletes return to sports

Annual checkups still in play

Of course, student athletes can have other health concerns, which is why experts agree these active youth should schedule preseason checkups with their physicians each year to ensure they are healthy and ready to play.

Trusted resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html)

American College of Cardiology

<https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>

Referrals

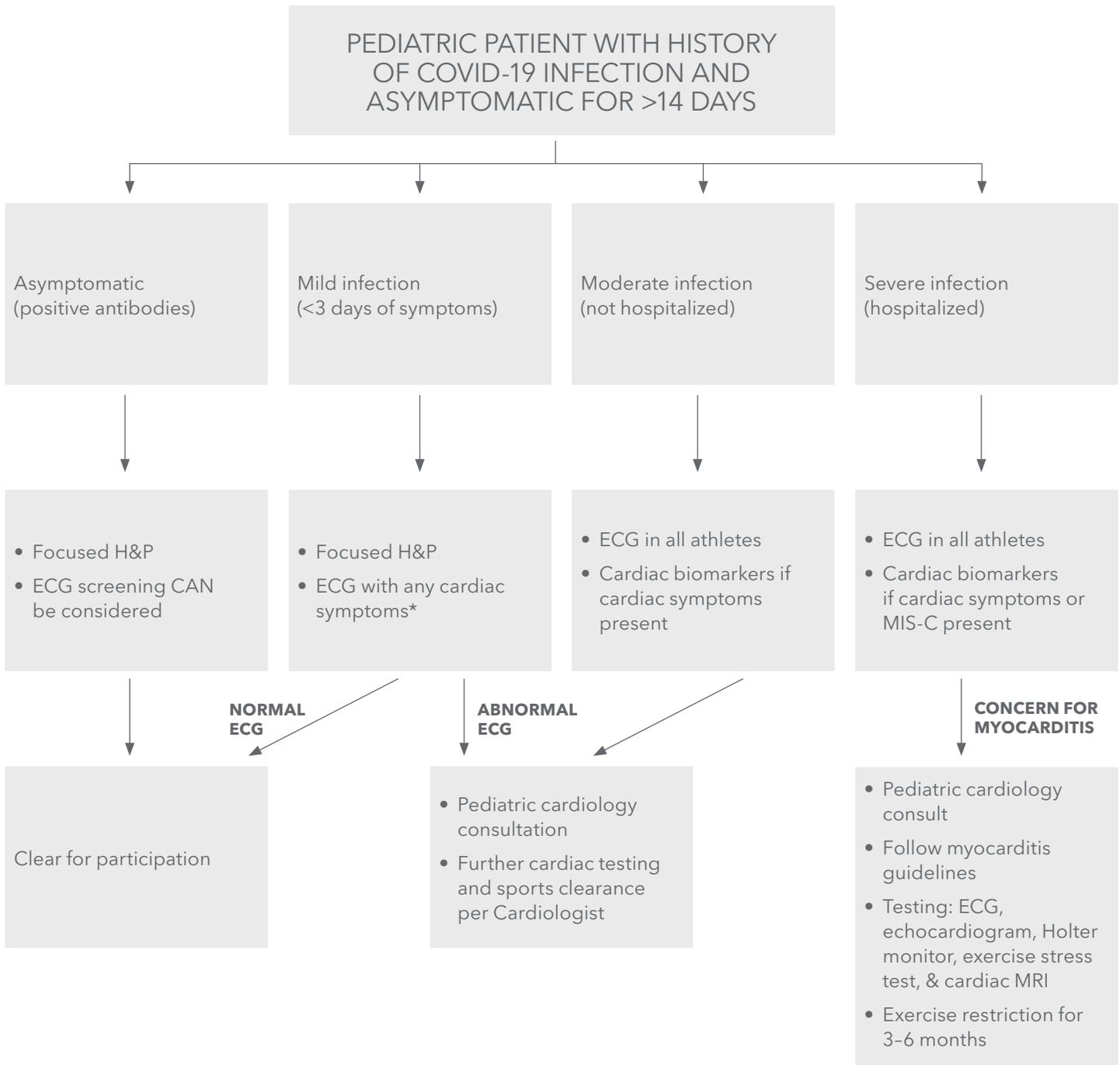
As specialists in pediatric heart health, our team can be a resource as you manage young athletes with COVID-19. We're happy to see your patients in our clinic at Kentucky Children's Hospital, Community Cardiology or through a UK TeleCare appointment. You can also make referrals to one of our regional outreach clinics:

Ashland	Rockcastle
Corbin	Somerset
Pikeville	

To make a referral, call UK•MDs at **800-888-5533**.

For urgent appointments within two weeks, please call 858-323-4370 to reach our clinic staff.

RECOMMENDED CARDIAC EVALUATION OF ATHLETES AFTER A COVID-19 INFECTION



*ECG is not sensitive enough to rule out myocarditis. Depending on the patient & situation, it would also be reasonable to follow the recent adult recommendations for return to play in this population. Adapted from: Maron, B. J., Udelson, J. E., & Bonow, R. O. Returning To Play After Coronavirus Infection: Pediatric Cardiologists' Perspective.