

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE GYMNASTIQUE



**MEDICAL GUIDELINES
FOR FIG COMPETITIONS AND
EVENTS DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These FIG medical guidelines are aimed at providing **all stakeholders** of the FIG, especially the Local Organising Committees (LOCs) of international events, with medical considerations and risk-mitigation protocols in order to effectively reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19 during the staging of international competitions.

It is crucial, before deciding how to hold an event, to assess the risks – in particular, whether an international competition can safely take place in a particular country – given the location, the health system and the circumstances of the planned event.

In this time of a global pandemic, LOCs must consult health authorities and local governments to ensure that the health system of the host city has sufficient resources to manage a crisis situation if it occurs.

Above all, the FIG, the LOC and all participants must comply with the laws and regulations of the host country and any local governments.

In the first instance, the LOC must get legal authorisation from the national government enabling the participation of foreign nationals. Once the participants enter the country, they must stay in designated places, their activities must be tracked and their health conditions must be controlled throughout their entire stay.

The LOC must know the health condition of every participant from two weeks before the arrival of their delegation, and must deny participation to individuals who may possibly have contracted the COVID-19.

Participants are required to provide a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test certificate before leaving their country of origin.

The LOC must manage and control the protocols for all participants. To trace COVID-19 cases even after the event, the LOC must have the identification details of all participants and be able to contact them for up to two weeks after the event.

These guidelines can be adapted according to the health situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the host country and the city.

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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak forced the cancellation or postponement of many sporting events in 2020. In this challenging time, the resumption of international competitions requires strict medical and social measures to mitigate the risks of COVID-19.

The FIG has drawn up these guidelines to ensure that athletes and their entourages can compete within a safer and more secure environment at all international Gymnastics events.

However, laws and regulations set by national and local governments must always prevail over the requirements and recommendations in these guidelines. For this reason, it is necessary that LOCs remain in close communication with their governments and health authorities, and make sure to obtain their full cooperation. With the situation of COVID-19 changing from day to day, the LOC may have to evolve their risk-mitigation measures or even consider cancellation of the event.

PLANNING AN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Early in the pandemic’s spread, in April 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) revised its guidelines for social events, including sporting events, in the context of COVID-19. Following the recommendation by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)’s Medical and Scientific Commission, the FIG utilises the WHO “Mass Gathering Sports Addendum Risk Assessment tools in the context of COVID-19” as a risk-assessment tool for competitions. It allows us to evaluate the risks of events based on the places, the number of participants, the origins of the participants, sport-specific risks and the environment of the venues. In addition to the risk assessment, it also provides the “Mitigation Checklist” to outline countermeasures according to the results of the risk assessment. The user can calculate an overall risk score and make their decision on whether or not to hold the event (<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/guidance-for-the-use-of-the-who-mass-gatherings-sports-addendum-risk-assessment-tools-in-the-context-of-covid-19>).

The WHO also defines the phases of the pandemic, which outline the pandemic’s severity (https://www.who.int/influenza/resources/documents/pandemic_phase_descriptions_and_actions.pdf, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK143061/>). According to the description of the phases, it is possible to plan appropriate timing for the competition, though over time the pandemic may move on to a new phase.

Risk assessment

The FIG recommends every LOC utilises the “Guidance for the use of the WHO Mass Gatherings Sports: addendum risk assessment tools in the context of COVID-19” and the “WHO Pandemic Phase Descriptions and Main Actions by Phase” to evaluate the COVID-19 pandemic status of the planned host country and city.

The “Guidance for the use of the WHO Mass Gatherings Sports: addendum risk assessment tools in the context of COVID-19” is available as an Excel file, and there are “Risk Assessment”, “Mitigation Checklist” and “Overall Risk Score” sheets. The “Risk Assessment” sheet gives the user a COVID-19 risk score based on the circumstances of the mass gathering sports event. The six questions can be answered with yes (1) or no (0) (Table 1).

Table 1. Risk assessment

| Additional risk of COVID-19 to the mass gathering sporting event | Yes (1)/No (0) | Score |
|---|----------------|----------|
| Will the event be held in a country that has documented active local transmission of COVID-19 (community spread)? | | 0 |
| Will the event be held in multiple venues/cities/countries? | | 0 |
| Will the event include international participants (athletes and spectators) from countries that have documented active local transmission of COVID-19 (community spread)? | | 0 |
| Will the event include a significant number of participants (athletes or spectators) at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease (e.g., people over 65 years of age or people with underlying health conditions)? | | 0 |
| Will the event include sports that are considered at higher risk of spread for COVID-19 (eg, contact sports)? | | 0 |
| Will the event be held indoors? | | 0 |
| Total COVID-19 risk score | | 0 |

(Source: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/guidance-for-the-use-of-the-who-mass-gatherings-sports-addendum-risk-assessment-tools-in-the-context-of-covid-19>)

The “Mitigation Checklist” sheet also provides a preparedness score for the event. You can incorporate mitigation measures in the list and then recalculate the score. According to the score given, you can assess the overall risk score. Then you can evaluate overall risk with the “Risk Vs. Mitigation Matrix” given in the sheet (Table 2).

Table 2. Risk Vs. Mitigation Matrix

| Total Risk Assessment Score | Very Prepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (76-100) | Somewhat Prepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (51-75) | Somewhat Unprepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (26-50) | Very Unprepared to Mitigate COVID-19 Impacts (0-25) |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 0 – Negligible | Very low | Very low | Very low | Very low |
| 1 - Very Low Risk | Very low | Very low | Low | Low |
| 2 - Low Risk | Low | Low | Low | Moderate |
| 3 - Moderate Risk (low-moderate) | Low | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| 4 - Moderate Risk (high-moderate) | Moderate | Moderate | High | Very High |
| 5 - High Risk | High | High | Very High | Very High |

(Source: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/guidance-for-the-use-of-the-who-mass-gatherings-sports-addendum-risk-assessment-tools-in-the-context-of-covid-19>)

There are recommendations for the particular event based on the overall risk (Table 3). If the overall risk is “very low” to “moderate”, the event can be held in line with the mitigation measures. If the overall risk is “high” or “very high”, the event must be cancelled or postponed.

Table 3. Key for Colour Determination of Overall Risk

| | |
|------------------|---|
| VERY LOW | Overall risk of transmission and further spread of COVID-19 in relation to the mass gathering is considered <u>very low</u> . |
| LOW | Overall risk of transmission and further spread of COVID-19 in relation to the mass gathering is considered <u>low</u> . Recommend checking whether mitigation measures can be strengthened. |
| MODERATE | Overall risk of transmission and further spread of COVID-19 in relation to the mass gathering is considered <u>moderate</u> . Recommend <u>significant</u> efforts to improve mitigation measures or reduce risk of transmission (decrease risk assessment score). |
| HIGH | Overall risk of transmission and further spread of COVID-19 in relation to the mass gathering is considered <u>high</u> . Recommend <u>significant</u> efforts to improve <u>both</u> mitigation measures and reduce risk of transmission (decrease risk assessment score). |
| VERY HIGH | Overall risk of transmission and further spread of COVID-19 in relation to the mass gathering is considered <u>very high</u> . |

(Source: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/guidance-for-the-use-of-the-who-mass-gatherings-sports-addendum-risk-assessment-tools-in-the-context-of-covid-19>)

Regarding the phases of the pandemic, LOCs should use the “Pandemic Influenza Phases”, which were revised for preparedness and response planning for an influenza pandemic (Figure 1).

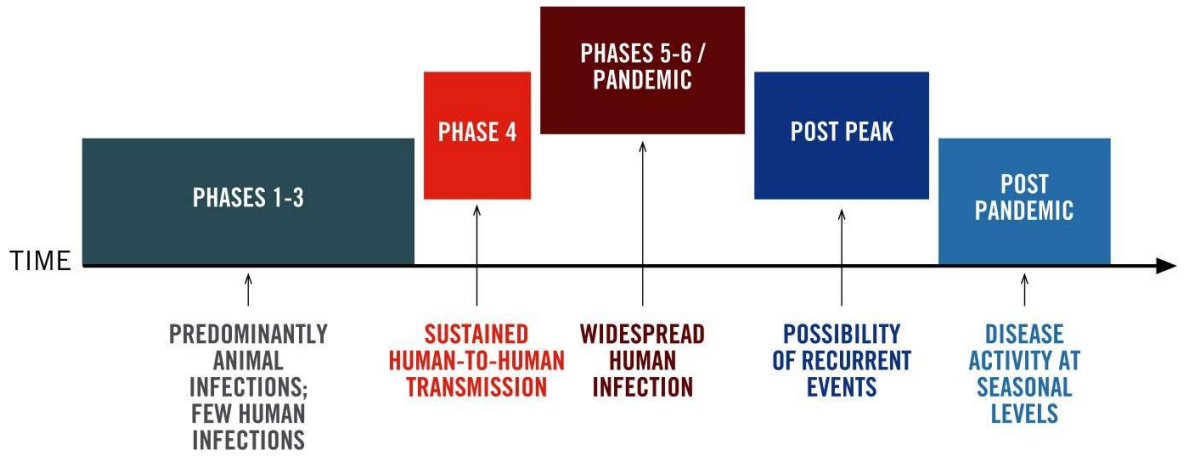


Figure 1. Pandemic phases (Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK143061/#ch4.s2>)

The LOC should also incorporate the reproduction number (R_0) to evaluate human-to-human transmission. The R_0 is obtained on a daily basis at the country level.

Organising the medical working team for COVID-19

Though the LOC can appoint either the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the event or another healthcare professional as the director of the medical working team for COVID-19, both the director and the medical working team members must have sufficient knowledge of COVID-19 and appropriate channels specialists on COVID-19, testing protocols and public health. The team must communicate with the health authorities about the risk-mitigation measures, testing, and the management of COVID-19 patients and close contact between people as often as possible throughout the event.

Government permission

Once the LOC make the decision to hold an event, they must obtain the permission of the host country’s government for international participants to enter the country. The LOC must be instructed by the government on the legal and health requirements for international and domestic participants.

For example, a country may require foreigners to report 14 days of health monitoring before their arrival and take a PCR test at most five days before their arrival. While staying in the country, the LOC might be required to instruct participants to take a PCR test every three days, and to continue with health checks for 14 days after leaving the country, as shown in Figure 2.

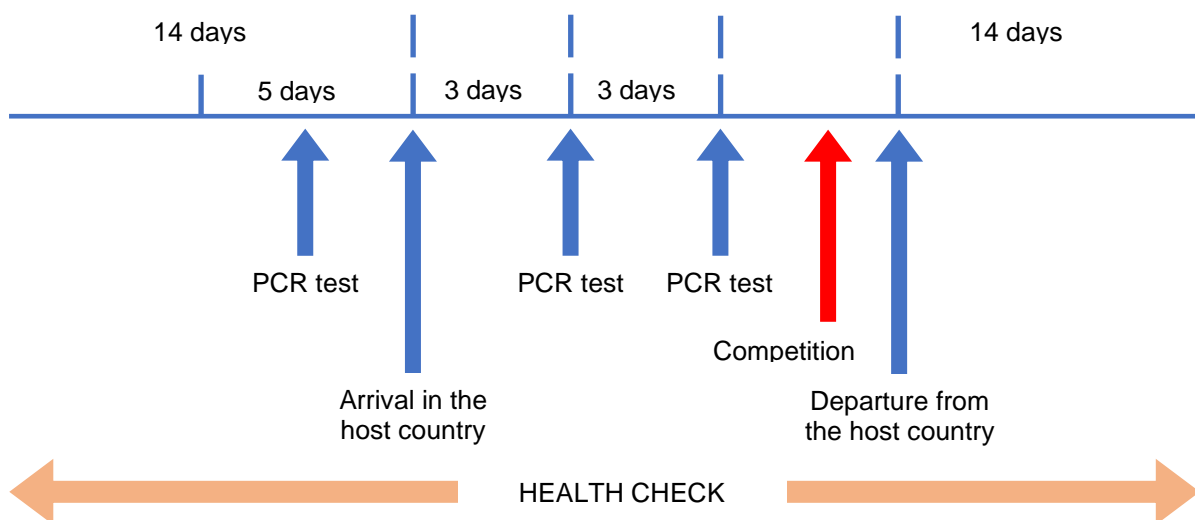


Figure 2. An example of PCR tests and health checks for international participants.

Preparation of the venue

This process should be done at the risk-assessment stage with the cooperation of the venue's local government.

Preparation of the accommodation

The LOC must prepare safe accommodation for participants. The hotels must accept and arrange the risk-mitigation measures, such as social distancing and safe serving of meals in separate dining rooms, providing hand-hygiene equipment and where possible avoiding contact with other customers. It is highly recommended, whenever possible, that all participants should stay in single-occupancy rooms. Again, while staying in hotels, all participants must comply with the laws and regulations set by the host country's government.

Measures to enter the host country

When the government authorities outline the measures to enter the country, the LOC must help the international participants comply with the rules.

For example, the government may request a visa, a schedule of activities while in the country, 14 days of health monitoring before departing the country of origin, a certificate of pre-entry PCR testing or other testing results, etc. The LOC must notify participants as soon as possible and help to obtain permission for entry in collaboration with the FIG and national federations.

Measures for travel to the host city

The LOC must provide transportation to the participants. Participants must comply with regulations at all times on their way to the host city, such as the wearing of masks or face coverings, social distancing, hand hygiene, etc.

The above measures vary depending on the condition of the pandemic and government policy at the event. Therefore, the LOC must consult the authorities while planning the event and obtain guidance on fixing the procedures by the national and local governments.

RISK-MITIGATION MEASURES DURING THE TRAINING PERIOD

Accreditation

The LOC must prepare spaces for accreditation where there is enough distancing and airflow, and must avoid concentrations of people.

At the accommodation

- I. Room allocation
Depending on the size of the competition, participants should be located on a single floor to avoid contact with other hotel customers. It is recommended that participants are allocated no more than one person per room whenever possible.

- II. Meals and dining room
The hotel must provide a dining room exclusively for the participants. Participants must avoid talking to each other while eating. If anyone does speak, even while eating, they should wear a mask or face covering.

Regarding manners at hotels and in dining rooms, please comply with the regulations set by governments and hotels.

- III. Changing rooms, toilets, showers
The LOC must be sure to provide hand sanitiser, and to maintain distancing and airflow.

At the training venue and field of play (FOP)

I. Standard precaution measures

The FIG requires all participants, judges and officials to take standard precautionary measures, such as frequent hand-washing, wearing masks or face coverings at all times and keeping a physical distance of at least 1.5 metres whenever possible. The only situation in which the safety distance does not have to be respected is when a coach provides assistance (catch, lead, spotting) during an athlete's performance. This phase must be kept as short as possible and the assisting person is obliged to wear a mask throughout.

Gymnasts do not need to wear a mask or face covering while they are performing at the training venue or on the FOP and keeping a physical distance of at least 1.5 metres whenever possible.

The FIG requires a physical distance of at least 1.5 metres whenever possible between judges at the judges' table. When this is not possible, judges should be separated by a plexiglass or acrylic board.

Training and competition in general are to be organised in a way that allows for small groups of people that are not changed for the duration of the competition. If, for example, there are to be major changes within the field of participants after qualification, it is recommended that the training/competition groups be adjusted *once* to ensure that the competitions run smoothly. The aim must be to ensure that in the event of infection, individual groups can be isolated without immediately affecting the entire field of participants.

The WHO recommends facilitating ventilation in the venue to reduce the virus in the air. The LOC must check the body temperatures and health conditions of gymnasts, coaches, judges, and other personnel every time they enter the venue. The LOC should install infrared cameras or sensors such as thermometers.

The FIG also requests gymnasts and coaches to avoid risky habits on the FOP. The unsafe practices related to virus transmission are:

- Spitting on the hands before performances
- Shaking hands with or hugging others
- Sharing magnesium carbonate with others. Depending on the discipline, the use of liquid chalk (70%–80% alcohol) instead of classical magnesium carbonate is recommended
- Any more close physical interaction than absolutely necessary between gymnasts and coaches

Everything used for the preparation of the equipment (magnesium carbonate, water, abrasives, etc.) must be provided by the LOC. These aids must be kept clean and disinfected regularly. A separate kit must be provided for each training group. It is not allowed to use other aids brought by the delegations themselves (honey, hairspray, sugar water, etc.).

The LOC must educate participants, especially gymnasts and coaches, to change their risky behaviour during training and competitions. The LOC can use resources published by the WHO and other health authorities (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>).

II. Cleaning and disinfection of equipment and floors

There are several ways to disinfect the equipment and floors in the training facilities. In general, 70%–95% alcohol is used for hands as well as the surfaces of materials. Sodium hypochlorite can also be safely used for surfaces such as doorknobs and tables. There are many commercially available products for environmental cleaning and disinfection. The LOC and the medical working team for COVID-19 can choose appropriate products

and the method of application by taking into account the materials of surfaces and the toxicity and stability of the products.

Please note that the WHO does not recommend the application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces by spraying in indoor spaces such as training halls (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/cleaning-and-disinfection-of-environmental-surfaces-in-the-context-of-covid-19>). The guidance states that when disinfectants are applied, a cloth or wipe should be soaked in disinfectant and then applied to the surface.

In many Gymnastics disciplines the mats represent the largest surface with which athletes can come into contact. If there is a choice, those with PVC covers are preferable to those with needle felt, as they are easier to clean and disinfect.

Individual underlays (large towels or fabrics) must be provided for training and competition phases during which the athletes stay for a longer period of time on one spot of the floor or mats, e.g. when warming up or stretching. These are to be changed or washed regularly (preferably daily).

III. Additional specific measures to be taken on surfaces to be disinfected by wiping (and/or spraying) at least before a new training or competition group arrives (per discipline):

Artistic Gymnastics:

- Disinfect: UB (bars), BB (surface), PH (pommels and body), RI (rings only), VT (table surface), PB (bars), HB (bar)
- Consider liquid chalk
- The training/competition groups should always use the same apparatus when doubled (i.e. PH, PB, UB, BB)

Rhythmic Gymnastics:

- Disinfect: individual and group hand apparatuses
- Use liquid chalk
- No rotation from one floor to the next during training. The training/competition groups use always the same floor

Trampoline Gymnastics:

- Disinfect: spotter mats (especially the handles)
- Use liquid chalk

Acrobatic Gymnastics:

- Use liquid chalk

Aerobic Gymnastics:

- Disinfect: floor (wipe)
- Use liquid chalk

Parkour:

- Disinfect: All surfaces that the athletes typically touch with their hands (bars, edges, etc.)
- Use liquid chalk

Gymnastics for All:

- Keep distance
- Avoid speaking out and physical contact

IV. Measures to be taken at least once a day (preferably after the last use of the equipment):

- Full disinfection of all surfaces that could have been touched by athletes and/or coaches.

Cases for injuries and illnesses

The CMO of the event, or the director of the medical working team for COVID-19, must contact local hospitals and emergency services through the local health authority before the planning stage and ensure that there is enough capacity for possible COVID-19 patients as a result of the event. Also, the CMO must provide a list of the facilities which can manage injuries and illnesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case of confirmed or suspicious COVID-19 patients among the participants, the CMO or the director must report to the local health authority and comply with its guidance. Healthcare personnel who come into contact with suspected COVID-19 patients must wear mandatory protective equipment (N95 masks, gloves, face shields or goggles, and coveralls).

Hospital list

| Injuries & Illnesses | Name of Hospital | Address | Contact Person |
|----------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|
| Possible COVID-19 | | | |
| Injuries | | | |
| Medical problems | | | |
| Ear, Eye, etc. | | | |

RISK-MITIGATION MEASURES ON COMPETITION DAYS

Accreditation for media and supporting personnel

- I. For international participants
The LOC must inform international participants about the requirements to enter the hosting country. Also, the LOC will require participants to comply with the laws and regulations set by government while staying in the country. Besides clearance to enter the country, the LOC may also require participants to have a health-monitoring report covering a specified period (for example, 14 days) before the competition.
- II. For domestic participants
The LOC will require participants to comply with the laws and regulations set by government while staying in the country. Besides clearance to enter the country, the LOC may also require participants to have a health-monitoring report covering a specified period (for example, 14 days) before the competition.

Spectators

The LOC decide whether or not the event accepts spectators based on the health and social context of the hosting city. When the event allows spectators, the LOC must put risk-mitigation measures in place, such as health checks at the entrance, implementing a personal tracing app, keeping physical distance in the stands, observing the rules on hand hygiene and the promotion of risk-mitigation measures.

Health check at the entrance of the venue

- I. Body temperature check
The FIG recommends installing a non-touch body temperature thermometer at all entrances to the venue.
- II. Health monitoring
Along with the body temperature measurement at the entrance, the LOC must request participants to submit a health-monitoring survey (see Appendix) at least two days before competing.
- III. Denial of entry
The LOC and the medical working team for COVID-19 can reject entrance to the venue to anyone who poses a risk of COVID-19 transmission. When declining entry to anyone,

the LOC must pay attention to the human rights of the person and give a clear explanation based on facts.

Risk mitigation on the FOP

→Same as “At the training venue and field of play (FOP)”

- I. Standard precaution measures
- II. Equipment and floor disinfection
- III. Discipline-specific considerations

Cases for injuries and illnesses

→Same as “At the training venue and field of play (FOP)”

Meetings

While attending any meetings, participants must follow risk-mitigation measures at all times. Participants must avoid physical contact, maintain physical distancing, wear masks or face coverings, and observe the rules on hand hygiene.

Ceremonies

The FIG recommends virtual ceremonies, which can reduce physical contact.

Interviews

The FIG recommends online interviews in open spaces.

HEALTH CHECK REPORT AFTER THE COMPETITION

All participants must monitor their health condition for at least 14 days after the competition. If anyone tests positive for COVID-19 within the monitoring period, he or she must report the result to the LOC or the medical working team for COVID-19. The LOC or the medical working team for COVID-19 must report to the local health authority and collaborate to trace and check the health condition of any close-contact persons and other participants.

APPENDIX

The medical team for COVID-19 (Example)

| | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Director | Y. IWASAKI MD | Osaka City Uni. JPN | President of FIG Anti-Doping, Medical and Scientific Commission |
| Specialist for Public Health and COVID-19 Prevention | Y.KIDO MD | Osaka City Uni. JPN | Associate Prof. Dept of Parasitology |

App for health monitoring

The FIG's Anti-Doping, Medical, and Scientific Commission is developing an app for personal health monitoring. The contents of the app include the following health information related to COVID-19:

- Body temperature
- Symptoms
 - Cough and abnormal dyspnoea
 - Cough
 - Stuffy nose or sore throat
 - Anosmia
 - Unusual aches
 - Unusual headaches
 - Diarrhoea, vomiting
 - Abnormal fatigue

Doping control

Doping control will be implemented with strict protective measures for both gymnasts and sample-collection personnel according to the World Anti-Doping Agency's COVID-19 guidance for Anti-Doping Organizations.

(<https://www.wada-ama.org/en/media/news/2020-05/wada-updates-its-covid-19-guidance-for-anti-doping-organizations>)