

Summary of COVID-19 Protocols

CYC Camps 2021

Updated: July 6, 2021

Introductory Comments

As was recently announced, we had some campers and staff members test positive after one of our five June preteen camps. As best as we can determine, it appears there was an exposure to the virus after testing negative, but before arriving at camp. In nearly all cases there were relatively mild (or no) symptoms, and no one required hospitalization to get over the virus. It appears that camp was an anomaly, however, various discussions were held to try to do an even better job of encouraging safety at our camps since most for the rest of the year will be teen camps, which run for a full week.

As a result of analysis and discussions with the camp directors and medical personnel, we are making a few changes. Some have to do with procedural updates at camp (limiting exposure at check-in, doing temperature checks on those who have flown in before they get in the vehicle, having the nurse screen everyone halfway through camp, etc.), but we also are making three changes to our protocols, indicated by ***bold italics*** in the protocols themselves below.

The changes can be summarized as follows:

1. We are asking everyone who needs to test (per the protocols below) to get a PCR test instead of a rapid test, ***if at all possible***. It is not required, but several sources indicate the PCR test is 85-95 percent accurate, whereas the rapid antigen test is only 50-70 percent accurate. At CVS Pharmacy the tests are free to you ***IF*** you click the box that it is being done for a special reason (flight or event, etc.) in the questionnaire. Camp definitely fits that description! It may be the same with other providers.
2. We are asking everyone to be very cautious and try to minimize the potential for exposure to the virus after testing and before camp begins by limiting being around crowds of people.
3. Many campers and staff tend to attend multiple teen camps that run back-to-back, so we are adding a requirement that any who plan to attend another camp in a short time frame must be examined at the end of the first camp by the camp nurse, and they must do everything reasonably possible to get another test before arriving at the next camp.

Updated Protocols

The status of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national and local restrictions and guidelines are constantly changing. As a result, the protocols outlined below *have been updated again* to meet the changing safety needs. What follows reflects our expected practices as of the date above.

Because we are taking a multilayered approach to ensure that no campers or staff members are exposed to or contagious with the coronavirus, the camps will be allowing for a more “normal” camp environment. Campers will be allowed to fellowship and participate in activities as they would in previous years. This means that social distancing and face coverings may not be required (depending on individual camps’ on-site, local and/or state regulations). Depending upon the local situation, our camps may not offer some activities that could be deemed to promote a greater risk of spreading infection.

We look forward to providing an excellent camp experience for our youth this summer. We believe we can safely do so with the following protocols. While having a positive and effective camp program that alleviates *all* risk of contracting COVID-19 (or other illnesses) isn’t possible, these multilayered protocols are intended to mitigate that risk. This document is provided to inform campers, parents and staff about some of the coronavirus protocols that will be in place for 2021 at COGWA Youth Camps. We are providing this protocol summary in advance to help campers, parents and staff make informed decisions about applying to and participating in the camp program this year.

Pre-Arrival Self-Screening

All participants will be expected to monitor their health for 14 days prior to arriving at camp and do their best to avoid exposure to the virus. [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) should be noted. ***Please take this step seriously and check your temperature if you have any concerns.***

Pre-Camp Symptoms/Exposure Reporting

In the 14 days prior to the start of camp, individuals are to report to the camp director if they develop symptoms of COVID-19, test positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact* with someone that has COVID-19 within 14 days of the start of camp.

(*Close contact is defined by CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset.)

Pre-Camp COVID-19 Testing/Validation

All participants will be required to present official documentation of being free of COVID-19 or having immunity in one of three ways:

1. Negative result of a PCR test or a rapid antigen test, taken one to five days before arrival at camp. ***PCR tests are highly encouraged due to greater accuracy.*** (The rapid antigen test must be processed in a lab. At-home tests are not yet considered to be accurate enough.)¹
2. Proof of **full vaccination** (at least two weeks after having received the final vaccine dose) will be accepted in lieu of a COVID test. A digital copy of your vaccination card **must be emailed to the camp director at least two weeks before camp starts.**

¹ If you do not have proof under points 2 or 3 and are concerned about the cost of a PCR or rapid antigen test, please note that in almost all areas there is **some** free testing available—either through one of the drugstore chains (Walgreens, CVS, etc.) or through your medical insurance company. You just have to search and be persistent in seeking them out. If you need help with ideas, please call the director of the camp you or your child want to attend for assistance.

3. Proof of **recent recovery from COVID-19** will be accepted in lieu of a COVID test. For this, you must provide **proof** of a **positive test** for COVID, dated **at least 14 days**, but **no more than eight months before** the start of camp—and you must be **symptom-free** before coming to camp.²

This warrants some more explanation, so **please read the rest of this section carefully**. There was uncertainty for a while about how long antibodies from your God-designed immune system provide protection like the vaccines (which essentially make the body create antibodies). A recent scientific article on the National Institutes of Health website (part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) concludes that antibody levels “remained fairly stable over time, declining only modestly at 6 to 8 months after infection.” The CDC website now says that reinfection, while possible, is rare—just as “breakthrough” cases of fully vaccinated people getting the virus are rare. However, please note, we **need documentation**, and there are some **strict parameters**. Some people just assume they have had COVID based on some symptoms, but never got a positive test result. Out of concern for the safety of the rest of the campers and staff, we cannot accept that scenario, not even if someone takes an antibody test. (Antibody tests are not accepted by airlines.)

Minimize Exposure Before Arriving at Camp

*All participants should be **extra careful** to minimize risk of exposure to the virus during the intervening time between testing and arriving at camp. We are not asking people to take off work or isolate, but please do your best to avoid large crowds. If you must be somewhere in a crowd, please take precautions like social distancing and whatever other steps you feel are appropriate.*

Health Screening at Check-In

Those exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms should **not** come to camp. All participants will be screened upon arrival. The screening will include temperature screening and symptom checking. At their discretion, camp directors may ask those with symptoms to return home or obtain an additional negative COVID-19 test before being admitted to camp. (A participant with a temperature over 100.4 F will be considered to have a fever.)

Regular At-Camp Health Screening

Camp will conduct regular health checks (e.g., temperature screening and symptom checking) of staff and campers. *At teen camps, an additional screening will be done by the camp nurse on Wednesday, halfway through camp. Campers or staff members who will be attending another camp in a short time frame must also be screened by the camp nurse at the end of camp and do all that is reasonably possible to get another test before the following camp (if they do not meet the other COVID-free validation points above).*

² The CDC says most people are only infectious for 10 days, though adults with severe to critical illness are **likely** to be infectious no longer than 20 days, so a positive test well before camp should be sufficient—as long as the person is symptom-free by the time of camp. The NIH article says antibodies are still normally effective at up to 6-8 months.

Enhanced Daily Sanitization

The camp will establish enhanced sanitization protocols to ensure that the areas frequented by campers and staff are clean and sanitized. This includes handles, counters, sinks, toilets and other frequently used and touched surfaces. Soap and hand sanitizer will be readily available. Participants will be encouraged to wash their hands and use sanitizer often.

Participants Who Develop Symptoms

Participants who develop symptoms of COVID-19 will be required to isolate and may be required to take a COVID-19 test at their own expense in order to remain at camp. If the camp is not equipped to offer specialized COVID-19 isolation units, such participants may be required to leave camp. Parents should consider a plan for the early departure of their camper should the need arise. The camp administration will work with parents, when appropriate, to coordinate departure details.

Parental Notification

Parents will be notified if their child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or has been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19.