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COVID-19: GLOBAL ADVICE FROM UIPM MEDICAL COMMITTEE



Keeping up with the latest news in the global fight against the COVID-19 Coronavirus can be a real challenge.

As the situation changes in different countries at different rates, it can also be difficult to stay on top of the exact medical advice and to know how to incorporate it into daily routines – especially as athletes start to return to training.

Dr Natalja Ofitserova, Chair of the UIPM Medical Committee, has written a special statement for UIPM News aiming to help the community understand the fundamental global medical outlook with some key principles that people in all countries should follow.



Dear athletes and National Federations members,

The current situation regarding the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic has affected all continents of the world and has had impact on all aspects of society, including sport.

However, the worldwide health situation is changing constantly and some countries and regions were able to cope with the pandemic or significantly improve the epidemiological situation.

To date, medical professionals are using improved methods of treatment and prevention, testing of COVID-19 and rehabilitation after illness. The scientific component is also developing and it is highly likely that a vaccine will be created by the end of the year.

Due to the relaxation of quarantine measures in different countries and a phased return to normal life, athletes have started training and the challenge of organizing competitions is being discussed.

The most important thing for all of us is to protect the health of athletes and not to spread the COVID-19 disease any further. To ensure this, the UIPM strongly recommends that all NFs follow their local Government advice and World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

WHO has developed a special addendum for sport event organizers to provide additional support in assessing the specific risks, identifying mitigation measures and making an informed, evidence-based decision when planning a mass gathering in the context of COVID-19.

Measures aimed at stopping the transmission of COVID-19 and minimising the risk of infection will be discussed in advance by the Local Organising Committee and UIPM when planning UIPM events.

We cannot predict how long this period will last. UIPM carefully monitor the situation in the world in the context of COVID-19 and will soon make the optimal decision for the 2020 and 2021 calendar in order to provide equal and fair competition opportunities for all athletes. Nevertheless, we all understand that we will have to adapt to the new reality and follow certain rules of behaviour.

Athletes and coaches, returning to training after lockdown, should keep in mind that athletes need to adapt for at least six weeks before they will be able to resume normal training. They should avoid intense physical activity and make health and immunity maintenance their top priority during this period. Stop physical exercises immediately if there is any concern regarding health and consult a doctor.

When planning the training process, take into account recommendations to reduce the general risk of transmission of a potential infection:

- All regulations regarding the use of sport facilities must be strictly adhered to
- Daily disinfection and cleaning after and between training sessions
- Sharing of equipment should be prohibited
- Train in small groups
- Daily health check for all participants, including temperature checks.

Please remember that you must respect social distance and respiratory etiquette, wash your hands regularly and correctly, cover your nose and mouth with a mask wherever possible and avoid shaking hands and hugging.

Modern Pentathlon, our sport, taught us to be strong and ready for various challenges, to realise our best qualities. The personal responsibility of everyone for the implementation of hygiene standards and rules will help us ensure the safety of joint activities, overcome temporary difficulties and achieve our goals in the next season.

I sincerely wish all of you good health and well-being, to remain safe and look forward with optimism and hope.

Visit the UIPM COVID-19 information page for more links and resources.

Athletes can also read an updated guide to anti-doping during the pandemic at the WADA website.