



INVASIVE MEDICAL PROCEDURES ON THE DAY OF COMPETITION POSITION STATEMENT

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) investigates and considers the potential health and safety impact to student-athletes of numerous issues, rules, and situations. One of these issues involves the use of invasive medical procedures on the day of a contest.

This position statement is intended to represent the general philosophy of the NFHS SMAC and is not intended to be used as a rule or to direct the individual practice of medicine by highly trained and experienced sports medicine physicians. In considering invasive medical procedures, the NFHS SMAC recommends that physicians remember that the patient is a high school-aged, interscholastic student-athlete.

The NFHS SMAC encourages a philosophy that high school athletics serve the purpose of providing boys and girls the opportunity for personal growth in a reasonably and acceptably safe-environment. Medical interventions can enhance athletic performance by promoting improved health and fitness and providing better control of chronic disease processes. Medical intervention can also enhance athletic performance by minimizing the symptoms of injury without increasing the risk of additional injury.

Medical interventions which increase the risk of disease exacerbation or additional injury are never appropriate on the day of competition, or on any other day, for a high school student-athlete. There are three steps of decision making for the basis of the Return to Play decision¹. These include evaluation of health risks, participation risks, and any factors in decision modification. If a disease process or injury is not adequately controlled by the day of competition to allow safe clearance for play with full function, then invasive medical procedures on the day of competition, performed with the sole purpose of enabling the student-athlete to participate, are philosophically inappropriate.

1. Creighton DW, Shrier I, Shultz, R, et al. *Return-To-Play in Sport: a Decision-based Model*. [Clin J Sport Med](#). 2010; 20:379-385.

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