

## Singing Guidelines during COVID-19

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- These guidelines for mitigation of the risk of singing during COVID-19 are supplementary to any federal, state, local or institutional regulations.
- “Regardless of the various phased reopening plans that states, provinces, and communities have in place, legal reopening or congregating is not equivalent to safely singingtogether in the same physical space.”<sup>2,4</sup>
- These guidelines apply to any situation in which two or more musicians are in close proximity.
- These guidelines will be updated as new information becomes available.

### General recommendations

- Outdoor lessons/rehearsals/performances may pose a lower risk of disease transmission than indoor.
- Maintaining indoor ventilation that brings in outdoor air in lesson, rehearsal and performance spaces at or above 3 air exchanges per hour may reduce the risk of contagion. Consult with HVAC technicians for assistance.
- The use of UV light and HEPA (MERV 13 or higher) filters in indoor spaces may reduce the risk of contagion.
- No accompanying instrument sharing should occur without appropriate cleaning; SARS-CoV-2 can survive on some metal surfaces for 3 days or more, so simply letting an instrument sit overnight does not eliminate the virus.
- No sharing of sheet music, supplies, food, or other physical items.
- Consider dividing large groups into smaller ensembles to better allow for 6’ social distancing.
- No talking among participants. No loud talking; directors consider using a microphone.
- Performers in straight rows, not curved toward the director.
- Participants don’t move within space during rehearsal to reduce aerosol transmission.
- Stop music 5 minutes before rehearsal ends to allow aerosols to dissipate.
- Plan for safe social distancing as performers enter/leave the space.
- Create a disinfecting protocol for the space. Provide sanitation products for participants and dispose of them safely.
- Communicate expectations of compliance with safety protocols to participants and parents.
- Conduct a Covid-19 risk assessment at each lesson/rehearsal/performance. All should complete a symptom checklist prior to each session.

### Risk levels:

- **Blue:** no known increased risk over normal daily activities
- **Yellow:** probable increase in risk over normal daily activities
- **Red:** real world evidence of spread of disease associated with this activity

### Levels of evidence:

- Level 1: strong real-world research showing benefit of the recommendation for musicians
- Level 2: laboratory research showing benefit of the recommendation for musicians
- Level 3: expert opinion based on current public health advice and medical expertise

**Singing** – risk level **Red**, evidence level 2 (see PAMA Covid-19 Singing Rationale, Recommendations, Resources document)

- Since singing in groups of 2 or more is considered among the “least safe” of safe activities, singing together is not recommended unless precautions, mitigations, and risk assessment/risk acceptance have been provided and agreed upon by the members of the group.
- Singing, to a greater degree than talking, aerosolizes respiratory droplets extraordinarily well. During singing with good breath support, small airways in the lungs close, then reopen during deep inhalation, releasing increased droplets to be emitted during singing. Deep breathing for singing
- also facilitates airborne droplets entering deep into the lungs, rather than only into the nose and pharynx.
- Consider virtual singing options and plan activities which include safety precautions.
- The use of well-fitted surgical masks that cover the nose and mouth appear to reduce the number of respiratory droplets and aerosol particles that are emitted into the environment during singing. (Tiny aerosolized particles spread through the air and linger, similar to cigarette smoke; larger respiratory droplets travel through the air like the spray of a bottle of glass cleaner, dissipating more quickly.)
- Masked singers stay 6 feet apart, face in one direction in straight lines (not curved toward director)
- Rehearsals should be no more than 30 minutes before taking at least a “1 air exchange” break (during which everyone leaves the room).
- Create a plan for safe storage of personal items and use of technology/AV equipment
- Consider testing singers periodically.

## References

- <sup>1</sup>University of Colorado-Boulder/University of Maryland Aerosol and Airflow Studies preliminary results (July/August 2020). Preliminary results can be found at:  
July 13 summary and slides -<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029971/preliminary-recommendations-from-international-performing-arts-aerosol-study.pdf> and  
<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029974/preliminary-testing-report-7-13-20.pdf>  
August 6 summary and slides - <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/second-round-of-performing-arts-aerosol-study-produces-encouraging-preliminary-results/> and  
<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4119369/aerosol-study-prelim-results-round-2-final-updated.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup>Covid-19 Interim Guidance for Choral Organizations (June 2020) by a partnership of National Association of Teachers of Singing, American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, and Barbershop Harmony Society
- <sup>3</sup>American Choral Directors Association’s COVID-19 Response Committee Report (June 2020)
- <sup>4</sup>expert opinion based on current public health advice and medical expertise
- <sup>5</sup>NATS (Nat. Association of Teachers of Singing) Covid-19 Resource List (updated regularly):  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18RksyJnZSZQAGR5yLRH4IDIWpZgsk9GVuYzPA42xofu/edit?ts=5ef3aa6f#gid=655189905>
- <sup>6</sup>“COVID-19 After Effects: Concerns for Singers” by L Holding, TL Carroll, J Nix, MM Johns, WD LeBorgne, D Meyer, JVoice (In-press Journal Pre-proof), Aug. 6, 2020.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0892199720302812?via=ihub>
- <sup>7</sup>“COVID-19 Is Transmitted Through Aerosols. We Have Enough Evidence, Now It Is Time to Act” by Joe Jimenez-UC-Boulder, TIME, Aug. 25, 2020. <https://time.com/5883081/covid-19-transmitted-aerosols/>