

# COVID-19 PLAYING TENNIS SAFELY



## **PHASED IN APPROACH TO RETURN TO PLAY:**

Based on the gradual lifting of restrictions and continued adherence to safety recommendations as outlined in the Government of New Brunswick Guidance Document of General Public Health Measures during Covid-19 Recovery: [https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/COVID19\\_recovery\\_phase-1\\_guidance\\_document-e.pdf](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/COVID19_recovery_phase-1_guidance_document-e.pdf) the following will guide the approach to return to play and the phases we will follow with any movement from Phase 1 onward based on further guidance from Public Health and the Province of NB. In all phases, continued adherence to Public Health measures is required as follows:

1. Hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette,
2. Avoid touching eyes/nose/mouth with unwashed hands
3. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
4. Physical distancing; maintain at least a 2 meter distance between yourself and anyone else

### **Phase 1**

*Return to play in a safe environment.*

- Singles play only with individuals in your household bubble.
- Players must adhere to guidelines/restrictions as outlined in 'Playing Tennis Safely' document.

### **Phase 2**

*Gradual addition of controlled programs/activities.*

- Doubles/Singles play.
- Lessons with a 4 player maximum.

### **Phase 3**

*Expanded programming. Controlled competitive play.*

- Small social tennis activities.
- Small tournaments with modified rules.
- Singles/Doubles organized play.

### **Phase 4**

*All restrictions lifted. Return to normal play.*

- Normal tournament play.
- Normal leagues/leagues/ladders/socials.
- Normal club programming.



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## **PHASE I - PLAYING TENNIS SAFELY**

### **PLAYER GUIDELINES/RESTRICTIONS:**

Now that provincial restrictions have been eased, then tennis, if played properly, can be a great opportunity for you to relieve stress and provide much-needed exercise. Of primary importance is taking every precaution to help keep all participants safe.

Because tennis does not require any direct person-to-person contact, players can enjoy the many physical and mental benefits that tennis offers so long as you practice social distancing by keeping 2 meters apart from other players to ensure you are in a safe exercise environment and follow other safety guidelines included here.

Although there is no specific evidence that tennis balls can spread COVID-19, we know that contamination by respiratory droplets from an infected person can potentially survive on hard surfaces up to three days. If you choose to play tennis, be sure to practice these safety guidelines.

### **BEFORE YOU PLAY**

- Arrange to play only with family members or others who live in your household or with individuals who are in your determined “household bubble”. Take extra measures as outlined below.

- Do not play if any of you:

- a. Are exhibiting any two or more of the symptoms of the coronavirus:

- Fever above 38 degrees Celsius
- A new cough, or worsening chronic cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Headache
- A new onset of fatigue
- A new onset of muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- loss of sense of taste
- loss of sense of smell
- In children, purple markings on the fingers and toes

- b. Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

- c. Have travelled outside the province in the last 14 days

### **PREPARING TO PLAY**

Protect against infections:

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- a. Wash your hands with a disinfectant soap and water (for 20 seconds or longer), or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available, before going to the court.
- b. Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. Do not share racquets or any other equipment such as wristbands, grips, hats and towels.
- c. Bring a full water bottle to avoid touching a tap or water fountain handle.
- d. Use new balls and a new grip, if possible.
- e. Consider taking extra precautions such as wearing gloves or a mask
- f. If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve.
- g. Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there.
- h. Avoid touching court gates, fences, benches. Wipes/hand sanitizer must be available.

## **WHEN PLAYING**

- Remain at least 2 meters apart from other players. Do not make physical contact with them (such as shaking hands or a high five).
- No doubles at this phase (unless all 4 players are in your “household bubble”)
- Avoid touching your face after handling a ball, racquet or other equipment. Wash your hands promptly if you have touched your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Don’t share food, drinks or towels.
- Use your racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit them to your opponent. Avoid using your hands to pick up the balls. Serve using only your designated tennis balls (see below).
- Stay on your side of the court. Avoid changing ends of the court.
- Remain apart from other players when taking a break.
- If a ball from another court comes to you, send it back with a kick or with your racquet.

## **USE FOUR BALLS OR SIX BALLS**

Although unlikely, it’s possible that a tennis ball can transmit the COVID-19 virus, as virtually any hard surface can transmit the disease. So here is an extra precaution you can take to keep safe when playing tennis:

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- Open two cans of tennis balls that do not share the same number on the ball, or use two different brands of balls (Wilson/Penn), or use two different colors if available.
- Take one set of numbered/brand/color balls, and have your playing partner take a set of balls from the other can.
- Proceed with play, making sure to pick up your set of numbered/brand/color balls only. Should a ball with the other number/brand/color wind up on your side of the court, do not touch the ball with your hands. Use your racquet head or feet to advance the ball to the other side of the court.

## AFTER PLAYING

- Leave the court immediately after play.
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer after coming off the court.
- Do not use the locker room or changing area. Shower at home.
- No social activity should take place. No congregation after playing.
- All players should leave the facility immediately after play.