

## ***ANNUAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RECORD***

Those who recite the Scout Oath vow to do their best to stay physically strong. During these past two years, that might have been a challenging promise to keep.

For many units, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of campouts and outdoor treks. It also shut down gyms, public pools and recreation centers. When your normal exercise outlets are taken away, it can be easy to slip out of healthy habits.

As more of us prepare for big adventures and extended treks this summer — or even getting back to summer camp — we all need to take a good look at our health.

### **Added risks**

Physical activity can put strain on your body, whether you're backpacking through the mountains or hiking down to the mess hall. And if you haven't been getting regular, proper exercise or maintaining healthy life habits, that hike over to the mess hall can be more taxing than you think.

The BSA recommends that everyone who participates in a Scouting activity have an annual medical evaluation by a certified and licensed healthcare provider: a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

When you visit your health care provider, have honest conversations with him or her. It's tempting to get back out on the trail, but if there are questions or concerns about your health before a physically demanding trip, reconsider going. It's better to Be Prepared than to risk having a medical episode.

Pay special attention to **risk factors**, like obesity, high blood pressure and sleep disorders, to name a few. Medications should be continued based on your health care provider's recommendations while you are at Scouting events.

The coronavirus presents a new risk factor. Studies indicate that COVID-19 can have lasting side effects. If you've been infected, you might not know how the virus has impacted your body long-term, meaning you might not know how your body will react during a Scout outing. Again, it's an important topic to discuss with your health care provider beforehand.

### **Back in shape**

To make sure you're in shape for upcoming adventures, review these resources:

[Annual Medical Health Record](#)

[Safety Moments](#)

[SAFE checklist](#)

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