

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

February 11, 2021

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

53 inpatients confirmed positive **8** admitted, awaiting test results

WashU Med employee vaccinations continue



Among WashU Med employees and students, 71.9% have received at least the first dose of the vaccine; 60% have completed the second dose. Completing the second dose is necessary to reach the vaccine's full effectiveness. Please contact covidvaccine@wustl.edu for more information about scheduling vaccination.

Safety measures still important after vaccination

After receiving the vaccine, it is critical to continue the mitigation strategies that have been proven to be effective — wearing a mask, washing hands and maintaining physical distance. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination, meaning it's possible to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and still get sick. Also, researchers are still studying whether vaccination can prevent the virus from spreading to others.

Volunteers needed at vaccine sites



There are many staffing openings — clinical (Epic schedulers and patient service representatives) and non-clinical — at BJC's two public vaccination clinics located at the Clayton Avenue Building on the Medical Campus and on the Christian Hospital campus. Non-clinical work includes patient check-in, data entry and second-dose appointment bookings. Please consider working a shift if you are available. Team members may be eligible to be paid for their time. [Learn more](#) about dates, times and locations of open shifts.

Double masking not necessary for medical-grade, N95 masks

Any mask worn to protect against COVID-19 infection or prevent its spread should consist of two layers and fit well over both the nose and mouth. This includes cloth masks for personal use, medical-grade masks used at work and

N95 respirators used for high-risk patient interactions.

All medical-grade isolation and surgical masks comprise more than one layer of material. The most common medical-grade masks contain three layers: an outer fluid-repellent layer, an inner absorbent layer and an additional middle layer that varies by manufacturer and intended use.



Because medical-grade masks already contain multiple layers of barrier, wearing two masks is not recommended, nor has it been shown to provide additional protection against the virus.

Additionally, wearing two medical-grade masks complicates the removal or "doffing" process and can actually create an increased risk for exposure if not doffed correctly. It can also create user discomfort with increased pressure at ear lobes and additional layers to breathe through.

A single medical-grade isolation mask provides appropriate protection. All N95 respirators also contain multiple layers of barrier protection against the virus, negating the need for an additional mask.

To keep our staff protected at work, continue current practices and wear a multi-layer, well-fitting mask that covers the nose and mouth, at all times.

Johnson & Johnson seeking emergency use authorization of COVID-19 vaccine tested at WashU Med



Last week, Johnson & Johnson asked the Food and Drug Administration for an emergency use authorization (EUA) of its single-dose COVID-19 vaccine — an easier-to-use option that could significantly boost availability in the U.S. It's been shown to offer strong protection against moderate to severe COVID-19.

Rachel Presti, MD, PhD, led a testing site for the phase 3 vaccine clinical trial at the School of Medicine, evaluating the safety and efficacy of a single dose of the vaccine candidate versus a placebo.

The regulatory review process for EUA can take several weeks. Learn more in this [St. Louis Post-Dispatch article](#).

Void in viral sequencing raises concern as COVID-19 variants spread



Despite the recent appearance of highly contagious SARS-CoV-2 variants in a number of states, including Missouri, no national surveillance program exists to identify such variants. To date, the United States is sequencing the genomes of just .36% of confirmed COVID-19 cases, with state rates ranging from .02% to 2.6%, according to an analysis of public databases by Science.

At Washington University School of Medicine, the McDonnell Genome Institute has been prepared for months to sequence 1,000 COVID-19 samples a week, but to date fewer than 100 such samples have made it to its sequencers, institute director Jeffrey Milbrandt, MD, PhD, [told Science](#). “We have it all worked out but there’s not a lot of takers. We are getting more inquiries from the press than from people who need the information. ... Some of us have pipelines available — they just are not being utilized.”

Women & Infants Center helps COVID-19-positive moms safely deliver babies



Five to eight percent of women arriving to give birth at the Women & Infants Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and St. Louis Children’s Hospital test positive for COVID-19, said Jeannie Kelly, MD, an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, in a [recent KMOV story](#).

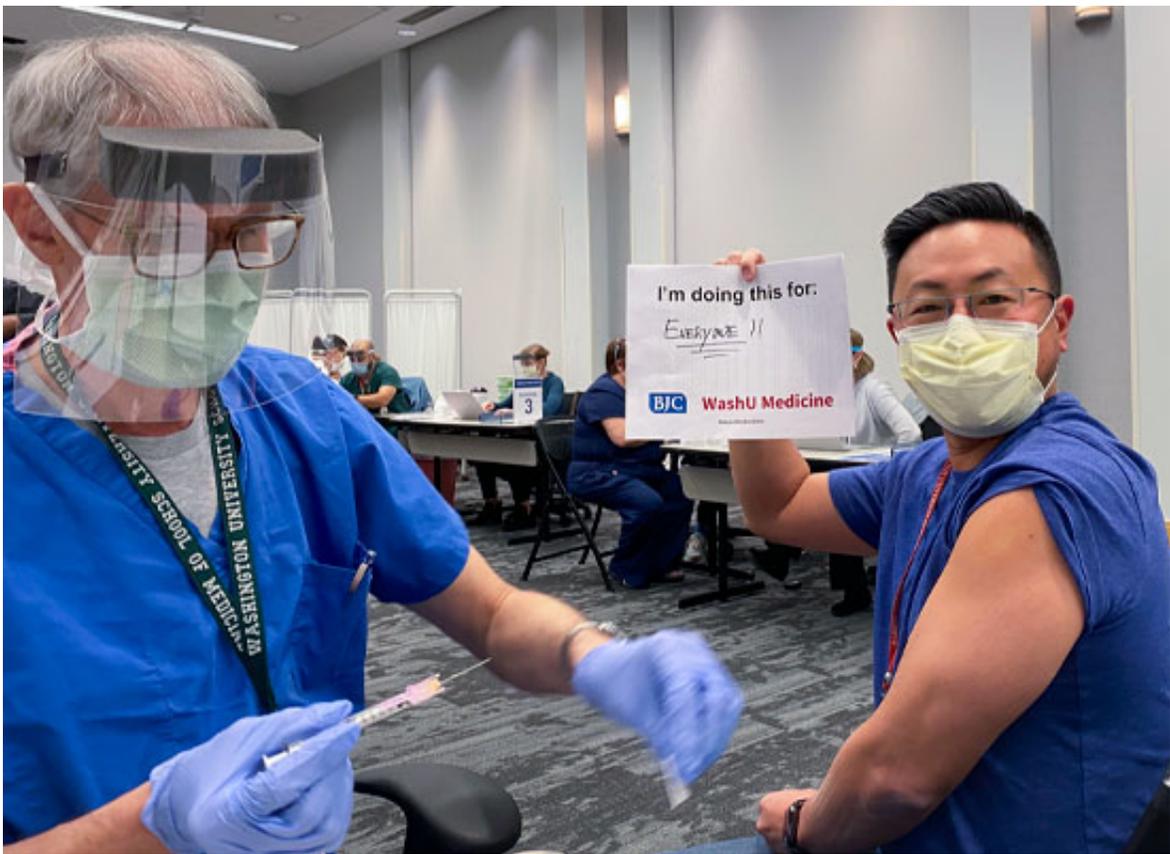
Caring for these patients has required Kelly and her colleagues to take extra precautions — using more intensive masking and gowns and asking the mom and her partner to wear masks as much as possible during labor and delivery — but she and her team have been astounded by the moms’ strength and by the women who are able to keep their masks on during labor. “They are very, very careful in keeping us safe during their labor,” she said. “This is a really scary time to be pregnant (and) to be delivering babies. I think moms are amazing, and this is a time when they really shine.”

WashU Med faculty message: Vaccination is safe, necessary step to fight pandemic



In [an editorial in the St. Louis American](#), Will Ross, MD, associate dean for diversity, principal officer for community partnerships and professor of medicine at WashU Med, talks about the science behind the vaccines' safety and efficacy. He encourages others to take action to protect themselves and their community, noting that African Americans and Latinos are twice as likely to contract COVID-19 and three times as likely to die from the disease.

“It's the only way our community, which has experienced so much distress at the hands of COVID-19, can get healthy,” Ross said. “And it's the only way we will get back to the activities we enjoy, with the people we care about.”



Alfred Kim, MD, PhD, assistant professor of medicine, receives the COVID-19 vaccine in the Eric P. Newman Education Center.

Important numbers and links

- Call the BJC/WashU Med employee hotline for COVID-19 exposure or illness: 314-362-5056
- Use this [online screening tool](#) before reporting to work
- Know your [screening stations](#)
- Review [inpatient protocol](#)
- Review [ambulatory protocol](#)
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program for 24/7 work-life support: 844-365-4587
- View WashU Med [employee and student testing data](#)
- Email story ideas and requests to heroes@wustl.edu

For Medical Campus updates, visit covid19.med.wustl.edu »

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