

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

February 25, 2021

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

52 inpatients confirmed positive 7 admitted, awaiting test results

Vaccine clinic added in Ellisville; volunteers needed at all locations



Laura Benoist, associate director, McDonnell International Scholars Academy, volunteers to input data for the COVID-19 vaccine clinic at the Eric P. Newman Education Center.

There are many volunteer openings — for clinical staff who have Epic access and for non-clinical staff (schedulers and patient service representatives) with Epic access — at the BJC public vaccination clinics. Locations include the Clayton Avenue Building on the Medical Campus, the Christian Hospital campus, and a new site in Ellisville that will be open March 13 and April 3. Non-clinical work includes patient check-in, data entry and second-dose appointment bookings. Please consider working a shift if you are available. [Learn more](#) about dates, times and locations of open shifts.

FDA review confirms safety, efficacy of Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine; WashU Med was a trial site

The FDA has confirmed a third vaccine is effective and safe in protecting against COVID-19. The vaccine, manufactured by Johnson & Johnson, is overall 67% effective beginning 14 days after vaccination, 77% effective against severe illness and completely effective against death from COVID-19. Efficacy increased over time and was demonstrated against more infectious variants seen in South Africa and Brazil.



WashU Med was a site for the phase 3 clinical trial evaluating the vaccine; that trial was led by Rachel Presti, MD, PhD, an associate professor of medicine and medical director of Washington University's Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Unit. Unlike the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one dose. The FDA will consider granting Emergency Use Authorization to the vaccine in the next few days, which would open the door to begin distribution in the U.S. shortly thereafter.

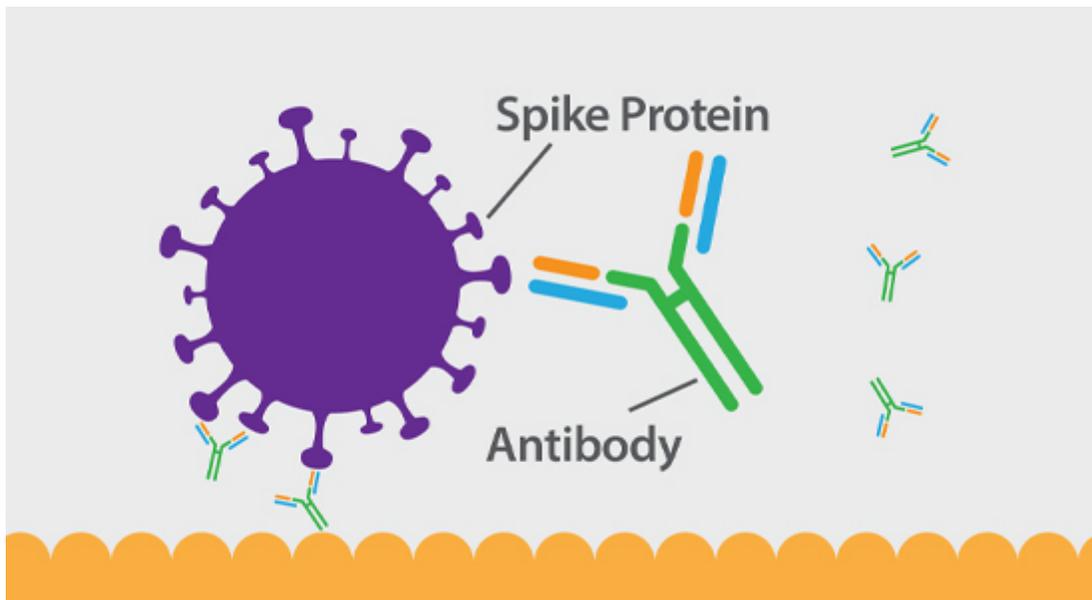
Continue to follow safety guidance after receiving the vaccine



Please continue to follow safety guidance while at work — even if you and your colleagues have been vaccinated. While the vaccine provides great protection against severe illness, the vaccine’s impact on asymptomatic infection and transmission is not yet fully understood. That means even if you’ve been vaccinated, it may still be possible to have the virus or pass it on to someone who is not yet vaccinated. No vaccine is 100% effective, and it’s not possible to know who among our colleagues is protected.

As health-care leaders, we must continue to model safe behavior for our patients, families and community. If you are in a large, non-clinical office environment and can maintain more than six feet of distance from colleagues, masks can be removed temporarily but must be replaced when you leave your desk.

Antibody therapy for COVID-19 patients now available on weekends



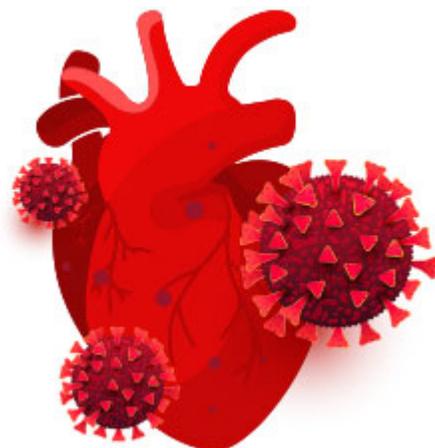
BJC now offers weekend hours on Saturdays from 2 – 6 p.m. to provide antibody therapy for COVID-19-positive patients at its Barnes-Jewish Hospital clinic. Located in [Parkview Tower \(PDF\)](#), the clinic administers bamlanivimab, a monoclonal antibody (mAB), through outpatient infusion. It's indicated for high-risk outpatients who are early in their symptom presentation and not receiving oxygen related to their COVID-19 diagnosis.

Unlike BJC's other clinics that provide the same treatment, the Parkview Tower location treats all COVID-19 patients requiring infusions, including oncology patients, solid organ transplant patients, and patients who require treatments that cannot be delayed until they are no longer symptomatic.

[Infographic: What are monoclonal antibodies? \(PDF\)](#).

Prioritizing COVID-19 vaccination among patients with heart disease

Patients with cardiovascular disease face a higher risk of COVID-19 complications. But with limited vaccines available, which heart patients should be prioritized for vaccination? Thomas Maddox, MD, professor of cardiology, served as co-chair of the writing group that developed the American College of Cardiology [health policy statement](#), published Feb. 12, that calls for those with advanced heart



disease to be prioritized over those whose heart disease is well-managed.

The recommendations are aimed at guiding clinicians in prioritizing their most vulnerable heart disease patients, while considering disparities in COVID-19 outcomes among those in different racial/ethnic groups and socioeconomic levels. “A coherent vaccine allocation strategy will consider the exposure risks and clinical risks of given individuals and populations,” Maddox said.

Delaying care during pandemic poses serious risks to heart health



A recent [report](#) found that 65% of heart disease patients have put off health screenings or checkups because of the pandemic. In a [KSDK story](#) about the report, cardiologist Andrew Kates, MD, a professor of medicine, said the number of people who have delayed health care is striking and that avoiding doctors' appointments could have long-term health consequences for patients. “People who aren't getting these conditions diagnosed or treated, they're going to start developing complications related to their heart disease or their cardiovascular disease,” he said. “So, we're going to see the impact of this further down the road as well.”

As coronavirus evolves, antibodies that fight it are changing too



A year into a pandemic, our immune systems face a new challenge. The coronavirus has picked up mutations that boost its ability to hop from human to human and thwart some of the antibodies that have reliably conquered it before. But the immune system is not doomed to be discombobulated by a never-ending barrage of shape-shifting variants, according to experts in a [recent article in The Atlantic](#). For every trick the virus plays, the immune system arguably has an equally impressive one. Vaccines remain an essential ally, armoring the body before it encounters the virus. “Yes, we should be concerned,” said Ali Ellebedy, PhD, assistant professor of pathology and immunology. “But I think we should also be optimistic.”



A warm February day brings people out to Hope Plaza to enjoy the sunshine.

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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