Today's COVID-19 stats from BJH

40 inpatients confirmed positive    7 admitted, awaiting test results

WashU Med pausing J&J vaccine per CDC, FDA recommendation; offering Pfizer instead

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug
Administration have recommended a “pause” in the administration of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. The agencies have made this move out of an abundance of caution due to the identification of a rare but serious potential side effect in approximately one per one million vaccine recipients.

Accordingly, we have canceled our vaccination clinic today on the Medical Campus, where we recently have been administering this vaccine to some of our students, faculty, staff and patients. Anyone with an appointment for today should have received a cancellation notice. Canceled appointments will be rescheduled for Friday, April 16, from 7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at the Institute of Health, where the Pfizer vaccine will be given.

More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the United States, and there have been a total of six reported cases of individuals developing blood clots within two weeks of receiving the vaccine. Some cases have been serious, including one death. It is important to note that we do not yet know if these cases are due to the vaccine. We will follow the investigation closely and determine our next steps based on the findings and federal recommendations.

Anyone who has received the J&J vaccine in the past three weeks should pay close attention to potential side effects including headache, leg pain or swelling, abdominal pain or shortness of breath. If you experience an adverse reaction, contact your personal physician and report any side effects to the WashU Med COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056.

We will provide an update when more information becomes available.

Volunteers are needed to staff the rescheduled COVID-19 vaccine clinic on Friday, April 16, from 7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at the Institute of Health. Please sign up using the online vaccine volunteer registration form.

Hand-held temperature scans during
WashU Med and BJC have discontinued active, hand-held temperature checks as part of the entry screening process. Fever alone is not often indicative of infection unless accompanied by other symptoms. This change is a de-escalation of safety measures that were put into place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As cases decline in our communities and vaccines become more readily available, WashU Med and BJC will slowly and methodically begin to lift some of these enhanced safety measures that were so imperative to slowing the spread when community transmission levels were high. In the meantime, entry screening will still be required for all persons entering the Medical Campus, including patients, visitors, contractors, vendors and employees. This screening will continue to include checking for recent positive COVID-19 tests, symptoms including fever, and/or close contact with a known or suspected COVID-19 case in the last 14 days. Thermal cameras will continue to operate and be monitored by screeners. Employees must continue to conduct self-screening through the online work entry screening tool and display the results to the screeners upon entry.

For breastfeeding moms, COVID-19 vaccinations may also protect babies
Nursing mothers who receive a COVID-19 vaccine may pass protective antibodies to their babies through breast milk for at least 80 days following vaccination, suggests new research from WashU Med.

“Our study showed a huge boost in antibodies against the COVID-19 virus in breast milk starting two weeks after the first shot, and this response was sustained for the course of our study, which was almost three months long,” said first author Jeannie Kelly, MD, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology. “The antibody levels were still high at the end of our study, so the protection likely extends even longer.”

WashU Med pediatrician urges vaccination of older teens
Recently, children and teens 19 and younger have made up 22% of the city’s new coronavirus cases — more than 10 percentage points higher than what St. Louis health officials have seen in children and teens throughout the pandemic.

In a recent St. Louis Public Radio story, Jason Newland, MD, professor of pediatrics, said it’s possible that a higher percentage of children and teens are getting the virus because fewer older people are getting sick but that doesn’t necessarily mean that cases are escalating in younger people.

While there isn’t a vaccine approved yet for children under 16, the Pfizer vaccine is approved for those 16 and older, Newland noted. He urged families to get their teens vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine, which will be offered at the new federal mass vaccination site at the Dome at America’s Center.

WashU Med saliva test credited with keeping employee, family safe
The COVID-19 saliva diagnostic test developed by WashU Med continues to be available to its employees and their families. Results for this highly sensitive test are available within a day.

Joy Haven, PhD, executive director of business affairs for Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology, credits the test with keeping her family safe. Haven and her husband, Harry Haury, first used the saliva test in December, when Haury tested positive for coronavirus after returning from a work trip. They were able to take the necessary precautions — including Haury quarantining in a separate home — to avoid spreading the virus.

Haven said they were thankful to have access to the “simple, painless” test and used it again before spending Easter with their family, even though everyone had received the vaccine, out of an abundance of caution for her elderly parents.

Each test costs $50; the university does not bill insurance. For additional information, please visit the covid19.med.wustl.edu website.

Spring arrives on the Medical Campus
First-year medical student Jake Hogan pulled his chair from his apartment in the Core to study outside near blooming flowers and trees.

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**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](https://www.wustl.edu) before reporting to work
- Know your [screening stations](https://www.wustl.edu)
- Review [inpatient protocol](https://www.wustl.edu)
- Review [ambulatory protocol](https://www.wustl.edu)
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program for 24/7 work-life support: 844-365-4587
- View WashU Med [employee and student testing data](https://www.wustl.edu)
- Email story ideas and requests to heroes@wustl.edu
To ensure that this newsletter is delivered to your inbox, add update@wusm.wustl.edu to your address book.