

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

Dec. 9, 2021

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Our numbers

COVID-19 hospitalizations

Barnes-Jewish Hospital

64 inpatients confirmed

St. Louis Children's Hospital

2 inpatients confirmed

WashU Med

Active cases

46 employees

1 student

The COVID-19 Update will no longer include suspected PUIs, due to the rapid return of COVID-19 test results.

Key announcements





WashU Med encourages all vaccinated adults to receive vaccine booster

At this time, WashU Med does not require vaccine boosters, but recommends that all vaccinated adults receive one, in accordance with the [latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Individuals who receive their vaccine booster outside of the Medical Campus should upload their documentation in [ReadySet](#). This documentation can be a picture of the Vaccine Administration Record card or other documentation that includes the individual's name, type of vaccine and date administered. Documentation for boosters received on the Medical Campus is uploaded in ReadySet by clinic staff.

WashU Med faculty, staff, fellows and postdocs can schedule an appointment to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 booster at the Occupational Health office by emailing occupationalhealth@wustl.edu or calling 314-362-3528. To receive the booster at a BJC HealthCare public clinic, please [schedule an appointment online](#). Individuals are not required to receive their COVID-19 booster vaccination at the same location that they received their first series of the vaccine, and they can also receive a booster dose from a different manufacturer than the vaccine they previously received.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Thursday [authorized](#) a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for 16- and 17-year-olds for emergency use. The CDC still needs to sign off before the booster shots can be administered.

Boosters may offer significant protection against Omicron variant

New research suggests that three doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine offers significant protection against the quickly spreading Omicron variant of the virus, [according to laboratory results released Wednesday by the companies](#). Tests of blood from people who received only two vaccine doses showed much lower antibody levels against Omicron compared with an earlier version of the virus — an indication that two doses alone “may not be sufficient to protect against infection” by the new variant, the companies said. While the experiments, conducted with blood samples in the lab, may not reflect how the vaccines will perform in the real world, they do suggest that boosters are likely to protect people. Other studies are underway to assess the effectiveness of the other COVID-19 vaccines against the Omicron variant.

Upload flu vaccine documentation in ReadySet by 5 p.m. tomorrow

WashU requires all employees to receive this year’s influenza vaccination and upload documentation in [ReadySet](#) by 5 p.m. on Dec. 10. Please note that those who do not provide their vaccine documentation by this deadline will be placed on unpaid suspension as previously stated in the [flu vaccination policy](#).

Visit flu.wustl.edu for more information, including [step-by-step instructions \(PDF\)](#) to upload your vaccine proof in ReadySet.

Celebrate the holidays safely

As the holidays approach, it's important to keep in mind that COVID-19 hospital admissions have doubled over the last two weeks and the number of positive cases in our community continues to increase. Safety remains the top priority. Please adhere to [guidelines for events and meetings](#) when planning or attending a holiday gathering on the Medical Campus.

You can protect your own health as well as the health of those around you when gathering with family and friends by taking steps such as getting a booster, wearing a mask and avoiding crowds. Find more holiday safety tips from infectious diseases specialist Steven Lawrence, MD, on the [WashU Med coronavirus website](#).

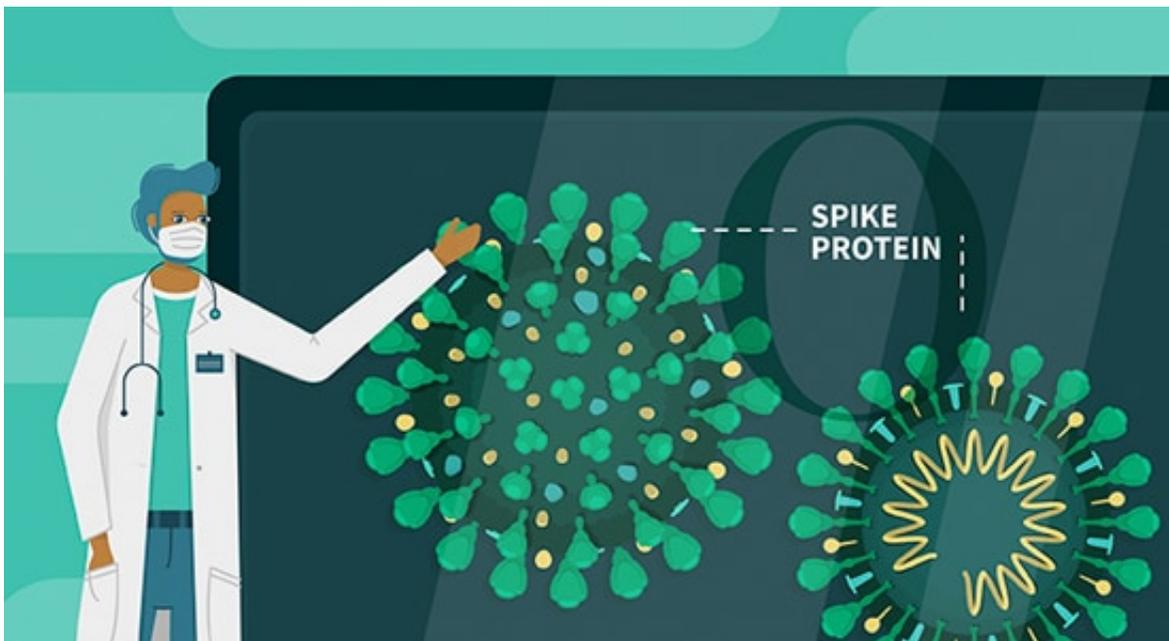
Continue to wear masks properly to combat COVID-19, flu

Wearing a mask properly can help combat COVID-19 and influenza infections, which are both on the rise. Please remember to be diligent about masking to protect yourself and others. A mask should cover the nose and mouth, and be worn at all times when indoors on the Medical Campus — unless you are eating or are safely isolated at least six feet from other individuals in a non-patient care area. Masking is also recommended in outdoor spaces when crowded or when distancing is difficult to maintain.

Mental health support available through WashU Med

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our lives. Learning to cope with stress — and increase resiliency — is more important than ever, for ourselves and our loved ones. WashU Med [offers support to help you cope and manage your mental well-being](#). Resources include one-on-one counseling, psychiatry services, mindfulness programs, webinars, tools and apps.

Other news



[Podcast: Omicron has arrived](#) (WashU Med News, Dec. 9, 2021)

WashU Med virologist Larissa B. Thackray, PhD, and infectious diseases specialist Steven Lawrence, MD, discuss the emergence of the Omicron variant and the continued importance of vaccines and mitigation strategies in protecting public health.

Media coverage

[St. Louis-area hospitals struggle to keep up with latest surge of COVID-19 patients, task force leader says](#) (STL Post-Dispatch, Dec. 8, 2021)

A sharp increase in the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 and staffing challenges in hospitals in the St. Louis region and across Missouri are causing lengthy waits in emergency rooms, said Clay Dunagan, MD, WashU Med infectious diseases specialist, BJC HealthCare's chief clinical officer and co-lead of the St. Louis Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force.

Resources

- [MO/Notify](#) exposure notifications
- [Online screening tool](#)
- Exposure & illness hotline: [314-362-5056](#)
- Work-life support/Employee Assistance Program (24/7): [844-365-4587](#)
- [BJC COVID-19 policies & procedures](#)
- [Washington University Physicians COVID-19 policies & procedures](#)
- [Medical Campus policies & updates](#)

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