

## WashU Med COVID-19 Update

Dec. 28, 2021

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

### Our numbers

#### COVID-19 hospitalizations

Barnes-Jewish Hospital

99 inpatients confirmed

St. Louis Children's Hospital

10 inpatients confirmed

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#### WashU Med

Active cases

75 employees

6 students

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### Key announcements





## CDC updates COVID-19 work restrictions for health-care workers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Dec. 23 issued [updated guidance for health-care workers](#) with COVID-19 infection or exposure. Instead of the previous 10-day waiting period, any employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 may now return to work seven days after a positive test result or, if symptomatic, seven days from onset of symptoms.

This new guidance will apply, effective Dec. 28, to WashU Med employees if they are:

- Fully vaccinated with or without a booster
- Fever-free for 48 hours
- Asymptomatic or with all symptoms markedly improved
- Unable to work remotely

**Occupational Health clearance is still required for return to work;** the Occupational Health nurses will assess each employee to ensure it is safe to return to work under the new guidance.

Although the CDC has released [updated isolation and quarantine guidance for the general public](#) — allowing release of asymptomatic, COVID-19-positive individuals after five days of isolation with ongoing masking for five more days — we do not think this is appropriate for the health-care environment, where patients may be unmasked and are often at higher risk. For now, we are isolating non-health-care workers for seven days. We will adjust going forward as more information becomes available.

## WashU Med COVID-19 testing temporarily limited

The COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline is experiencing overwhelming call volumes. To ensure that we meet our critical health-care workforce needs, effective immediately, the hotline is testing all symptomatic employees but is prioritizing testing for on-campus, patient-facing employees. If you are asymptomatic, please seek testing through your physician, an urgent care center, or a local pharmacy. [Read the full announcement](#) on the covid19.med.wustl.edu website.

## Prohibited: social events and food/drink in business meetings

Effective immediately, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, there should be no in-person social events or parties on the Medical Campus. In-person business meetings may continue, but food and drink should not be served.

## Employees with COVID-19 symptoms required to stay home, call Occupational Health hotline

COVID-19 infections among WashU Med employees have risen in recent weeks, with nearly all related to exposures at home or in the community. All employees reporting to campus should continue using the [online screening tool](#) daily to monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#). These symptoms can be mild and seemingly benign, particularly among vaccinated individuals who become infected. **If you are experiencing any symptoms, you are required to:**

- Stay home. Leave your workplace if your symptoms develop at work.
- Begin [isolating](#) immediately.
- Notify your supervisor.
- Call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056 to arrange for testing, and follow the instructions you receive.
- If you test positive, you must isolate for seven days from symptom onset.

Learn more about WashU Med's [exposure and illness procedures](#).

## PPE reminders for health-care providers

*Recommended PPE for first contact with all patients:* Care providers who are the first point of contact with patients who have not yet been thoroughly assessed for possible COVID-19 symptoms, particularly in the emergency department, outpatient clinics and Women's Assessment Center are encouraged to wear eye protection and an N95 mask with all patient contact. When interacting with unknown or positive COVID-19 patients, it is necessary to wear appropriate PPE, specifically eye protection and an N95 respirator to protect yourself and your team members. [See full guidelines](#) on the covid19.med.wustl.edu website.

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## 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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