

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

Jan. 4, 2022

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Our numbers

COVID-19 hospitalizations

Barnes-Jewish Hospital

143 inpatients confirmed

St. Louis Children's Hospital

37 inpatients confirmed

WashU Med

Active cases

150 employees

9 students

Key announcements

Updated COVID-19 guidelines for WashU Med employees

The BJC HealthCare/WashU Med COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline continues to receive a very high number of calls from employees concerned about symptoms, testing and returning to work. The team is working hard to meet the demand and we ask everyone to show grace and understanding to their Occupational Health colleagues, as the number of calls has far exceeded capacity.

To streamline, we've updated our [WashU Med COVID-19 guidelines for employees](#). Please note that in certain instances the protocols for health-care workers and non-health-care workers differ. Health-care workers are currently being prioritized for testing; symptomatic individuals should call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056 to arrange a test. For now, those who work at home and non-clinical employees may find it faster to get tested elsewhere and to report results to Occupational Health.

Employees are expected to notify Occupational Health at occupationalhealthservice@wusm.wustl.edu during normal business hours for the following:

- Reporting positive COVID-19 test results from outside sources if they did not go through the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline for testing. We highly recommend symptomatic health-care workers arrange testing through the hotline, as not all outside testing methods meet OSHA requirements.
- Before returning to work after absence from COVID-19, flu or other communicable diseases.

Employees should call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056:

- If they are sick or experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, flu or other infectious disease, regardless of how mild, for assessment and potential COVID-19 and/or flu testing.
- Note that we cannot perform asymptomatic exposure testing at this time. Options for this include your primary care physician, local pharmacy, local urgent care, or several city pop-up testing sites.

State of Missouri adding testing options

As the omicron variant drives increased COVID-19 transmission in our communities, the State of Missouri continues to provide drive-through community testing sites throughout the state and is actively working to add locations and available hours to the St. Louis and Kansas City areas this week. Some sites require pre-registration and scheduling; others allow walk-ins.

Missourians can get a free COVID-19 test by:

- Utilizing one of the state's [free community testing sites](#).
 - Patients do not need to be Missouri residents to be tested through this process.
 - [Illinois testing sites](#) are also available; choose the Edwardsville box for Metro East locations.
- Ordering a test through the state's free [at-home COVID-19 testing program](#).

CDC approves measures to increase access to Pfizer vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Tuesday [recommended two actions](#) to increase access to additional doses of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine as COVID-19 cases continue to surge:

- Shortening the recommended interval of time between the initial series of Pfizer vaccinations and the Pfizer booster shot, from six months to five months. The recommended booster interval for other vaccines has not changed.
- Allowing kids ages 5 to 11 with moderately or severely weakened immune systems to receive an additional dose 28 days after their second Pfizer dose. Currently, only the Pfizer vaccine is recommended for that age group.

The CDC's decisions followed recommendations made by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Monday. The FDA also approved Pfizer booster shots for 12- to 15-year olds. A [CDC expert advisory committee](#) is expected to discuss eligibility for that age group during a meeting Wednesday.

WashU Med strongly encourages all faculty, staff and students to receive the booster as soon as possible, and to have your families receive the booster as well.

Slight Fever?
Sore Throat?
Cough?

Stay home!

Your
colleagues
will
thank you.

*Thanks
for doing
your part.
Slow the
spread.*



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](#)

To ensure that this newsletter is delivered to your inbox, add update@wusm.wustl.edu to your address book.