WashU Med COVID-19 Update

Jan. 27, 2022

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Our numbers

COVID-19 hospitalizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Confirmed cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnes-Jewish Hospital</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WashU Med

Active cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key announcements

MOVING AVERAGE: COVID PATIENTS CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED

Source: St. Louis Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force, which represents the region’s four major health systems, including BJC HealthCare.

COVID-19 cases drop locally, but surge continues across much of Missouri

After a sharp surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations across the nation, the rate of infection is declining in the St. Louis region. But across Missouri, particularly in rural areas, case levels and hospitalizations remain near record highs. Even if cases continue to drop, hospitals could be strained for weeks, so residents should remain vigilant, according to WashU Medicine infectious diseases doctors. Vaccinations and continued public health measures can help in case rates decline.

This week, there were 1,194 COVID-19 patients at BJC HealthCare, Mercy, SSM Health and St. Luke’s Hospital systems, down from the record of 1,444 reported on Jan. 17, according to the data from the St. Louis Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force. See related article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

COVID-19 symptoms and a negative rapid test? Here’s what to do next…

At-home rapid antigen tests are becoming more widely available through state and federal programs. A positive at-home rapid test is helpful in identifying COVID-19 in people experiencing symptoms. Negative results can provide reassurance to asymptomatic people, but are less helpful with individuals experiencing symptoms.

During periods of high transmission — like now — rapid tests can return false negative results up to 20% of the time in people with symptoms who actually do have COVID-19. For this reason, if you have symptoms, a negative rapid antigen test cannot assure that you do not have COVID-19.

If you have symptoms, please contact the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056 for guidance on testing.

Quarantine guidelines for the vaccinated vs. the unvaccinated

Quarantine times are longer for unvaccinated employees because those who are unvaccinated shed active virus longer than those who are vaccinated.

For vaccinated people, the average duration of viral shedding — or time they are infectious — is around five days (up to 6 1/2 days), so they can come back to work after being out for seven days. Because that duration is longer with unvaccinated people, they are restricted from work for the full 10-day isolation period in health-care settings due to the risks to other staff and to patients.

Other news

Podcast: Why the omicron wave is different

WashU Med News, Jan. 26, 2022

WashU Immunologist Ali Ellebedy, PhD, says despite record levels of infections and hospitalizations due to the omicron variant, immunity from vaccination and infection has prevented even worse scenarios; he advocates for updating vaccines to make them more effective against omicron and future variants.

Deaths Months Afer Covid Point to Pandemic’s Grim Afermath

Bloomberg, Jan. 25, 2022

WashU Med nephrologist Ziyad Al-Aly, MD, who studies long COVID, said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s practice of only counting COVID-related deaths that occur in the first few weeks afer infection misses the pandemic’s true toll.

Up to 45% of expectant mothers testing positive for COVID-19 before afer giving birth

KSDK, Jan. 21, 2022

WashU Med obstetrician Ebony Carter, MD, urges pregnant women to get COVID-19 vaccines and stresses that moms who get a COVID booster also have a higher chance of passing a protective antibody to their babies.

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 guidelines & procedures
• Medical Campus policies & updates

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