Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

WashU Med COVID-19 Update
Feb. 3, 2022

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Our numbers

COVID-19 hospitalizations

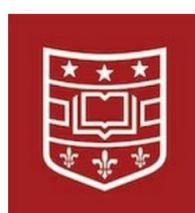|	
Barnes-Jewish Hospital	**154** inpatients confirmed
St. Louis Children's Hospital	**20** inpatients confirmed

WashU Med

Active cases	**41** employees
	4 students

Key announcements

WashU Med relaxes restrictions for visitors, travel

WashU Med continues to closely monitor COVID-19 transmission in the community and on the Medical Campus. In response to a decline in case numbers, the following safety protocols have changed:

- Visitors can now attend speaking/educational events on the Medical Campus.
- Work-related travel is no longer restricted for health-care workers.

As a reminder, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission on campus, WashU Med continues to prohibit in-person social events or parties on the Medical Campus and university-sponsored social events off campus. In-person business meetings may continue, but food and drink should not be served. Packaged meals may be provided to meeting participants as they are leaving.

Learn more about campus safety procedures.

These rules may change as disease activity changes and CDC guidelines and science advance, including potential return to more restricted guidance based on local conditions.

February COVID-19 booster vaccination clinics for employees

BJC HealthCare and WashU Med employees can receive the Pfizer COVID-19 booster at a clinic being held every Friday during February from 8 a.m. – noon at the Institute of Health (IOH). The clinic is located in the Planning, Design & Construction office on the second floor, at the top of the IOH main lobby stairs. WashU Med employees should contact occupationalhealth@wustl.edu to schedule an appointment.

Additionally, employees and their family members may schedule an appointment online to receive a Pfizer/BioNTech booster at a BJC public vaccine clinic. To find other locations, or a Moderna vaccine site, visit vaccinatestl.org, or vaccines.gov. You can also text your ZIP code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations.

Note: Individuals who have already been approved for a COVID-19 vaccine exemption are not expected to receive a booster or request an additional exemption.

Occupational Health resumes exposure tracing, asymptomatic testing

On Monday, Feb. 7, Occupational Health will resume services which were temporarily paused due to overwhelming demand for COVID-19 testing:

- Providing close-contact COVID-19 exposure notifications and tracing for employee-to-employee contacts.
- Testing asymptomatic employees who have had a COVID-19 exposure.

An exposure is defined as being within six feet of a known positive person for 15 minutes or more without proper personal protective equipment. Employees who have been exposed to COVID-19 should call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056. If you have been exposed or have any symptoms, you may need to be tested or to quarantine/isolate, or both.

Learn more about WashU Med's exposure and illness procedures.

Send us your COVID-19 questions

Do you have questions about vaccinations, testing, WashU Med COVID-19 policies or other ways the school is responding to the pandemic? We've set up an email inbox where WashU Med faculty, staff and students can send questions. We'll answer as many as we can in the COVID-19 Update. The person asking the question will not be identified in the newsletter, so no need to be shy. The address: covidqueries@wustl.edu.

COVID-19 exposure-alert system that uses smartphones expands in Missouri

Washington University in St. Louis is expanding access to MO/Notify, a smartphone system that privately sends pop-up alerts to users in Missouri when they have spent time near someone who later tests positive for COVID-19. Google and Apple recently added a new feature to the notification system that allows users to confidentially enter their own positive test results. Previously, only testing sites or public health entities could provide the verification link required to add positive test results in the system. The change was made to account for infections detected during home testing, as more COVID-19 tests have become available for people to use at home. While the exposure notifications are free to use, they only work if people voluntarily opt in to using the system.

Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine receives full FDA approval

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted full approval to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for use in individuals ages 18 and older. The Moderna vaccine joins Pfizer, which received full approval in August 2021 for use in those ages 16 and older. More details are available in this CNN story. To date in the U.S., 539 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been distributed, and 211 million residents have been fully vaccinated, which is 64% of the population.

Other news

Podcast: Highly contagious omicron is a roller coaster
(WashU Med News, Feb. 3, 2022)
WashU Med virologist and immunologist Michael Diamond, MD, PhD, discusses how omicron makes many less sick than earlier variants, but is deadly to some and has negated some previously effective therapies.

Vaccinate and test. That advice isn't much help to parents who have kids under 5. (National Public Radio, Jan. 27, 2022)
WashU Med pediatric infectious disease specialist Rachel Orscheln, MD, said everyone around unvaccinated children should follow precautions to form a cocoon of safety, including wearing a mask, getting a flu shot, limiting socializing to the outdoors when possible and avoiding contact with sick people.

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
- Send COVID-19 questions to covidqueries@wustl.edu