

## Our numbers

### COVID-19 hospitalizations

Barnes-Jewish Hospital	77 inpatients confirmed
St. Louis Children's Hospital	11 inpatients confirmed

### WashU Med

Active cases	24 employees
	1 student

## Key announcements



### WashU Med begins rollback of some COVID-19 mitigation measures

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:

- In-person social events or parties on the Medical Campus and university-sponsored social events off campus are allowed.
  - Masking is required when indoors, optional when outdoors but recommended in crowds or large groups. There are no distancing requirements.
- Food and drink may be served at outdoor events. Food and drink can be served at indoor events with less than 30 people with increased spacing whenever possible. Indoor events with more than 30 people may not serve food or drink.
- Washington University undergraduate and graduate students from both campuses may shadow providers in the clinical environment beginning in April.
- Speakers in auditoriums or other venues where the speaker is at least 6 feet away from the audience may unmask to speak, but should re-mask whenever near others.

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.

### Your COVID-19 questions

Thank you for continuing to send us your questions about vaccinations, testing, WashU Med COVID-19 policies and other ways the school is responding to the pandemic. Please keep in mind that we might not be able to answer all questions submitted. You must continue to call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056 to report a positive test and get advice directly from Occupational Health. For questions about your personal medical situation, please consult your physician.

### How does natural immunity work and are there ongoing studies to determine if it provides more protection or less than immunization? What is the risk of getting COVID-19 if you are vaccinated? Boosted? Have had prior COVID-19 infection? All of the above?

After recovering from a COVID-19 infection, most people have immunity that provides very good protection against re-infection for at least three months, and excellent protection from severe re-infection. Studies comparing protection gained by prior infection versus protection generated from vaccination generally show that they are similarly effective, depending on which vaccine was used and the number and timing of doses. People who have been both vaccinated and had prior infection have the highest levels of protection. Prior infection status has not been used as a confirmation of protection because many studies showed considerable variability in protection depending on the severity of the initial infection, whereas the protection from vaccination is more predictable. In addition, antibody tests have not always been reliable at confirming prior infection.

— Steve Lawrence, MD, infectious diseases specialist.

### If I've had COVID-19 in the past few months, do I still need to get tested and stay home if I have symptoms (presuming it is another cold-causing virus and not SARS-CoV-2)?

We currently do not require you to be tested if you have had COVID-19 within the last 90 days. However, at this time, depending on your symptoms, we may recommend testing for influenza. It is always best to call the COVID-19 Exposure/Illness Hotline at 314-362-5056 to get advice if you have symptoms.

— Eva Aagaard, MD, interim senior administrator for Occupational Health.

If you have a question for our WashU Med health experts, send to [covidqueries@wustl.edu](mailto:covidqueries@wustl.edu). This mailbox is exclusively for WashU Med faculty, staff and students.

### COVID-19 booster vaccination clinics on the Medical Campus

BJC HealthCare and WashU Med employees can receive the Pfizer COVID-19 booster at a clinic being held Feb. 18 and 25 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. Walk-in appointments are available for WashU Med employees. Please bring your employee badge.

Additionally, the vaccination clinic at the Center for Advanced Medicine is accepting walk-ins from 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. in addition to [scheduled appointments](#) available from 8 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. Located on the third floor, the vaccine clinic is open Monday – Friday to employees and the general public ages 18+. BJC offers the Pfizer vaccine.

To find other locations, or a Moderna vaccine site, visit [vaccinatestl.org](https://vaccinatestl.org), or [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov). You can also text your ZIP code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations.

## Other news

[Podcast: Fighting burnout in health care](#) (WashU Med News, Feb. 17, 2022)

This episode of WashU Med's 'Show Me the Science' podcast focuses on the pandemic's role in anxiety, depression and other issues for health-care workers, as well as how to train future workers to get help before burnout begins.

[COVID-19 survivors face increased mental health risks up to a year later](#) (WashU Med News, Feb. 16, 2022)

People who have had mild or serious COVID-19 infections have a significantly higher chance of experiencing mental health problems compared with those who haven't had COVID-19, according to new research from WashU Med and the Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care System.

[Antibodies improve in quality for months after COVID-19 vaccination](#) (WashU Med News, Feb. 15, 2022)

Antibodies elicited by COVID-19 vaccination become steadily more powerful for at least six months after vaccination, according to a WashU Med study. This rising antibody quality may partially compensate for falling levels, says senior author Ali Ellebedy, PhD, who cautions the emergence of new variants could diminish antibodies' efficacy in fighting off a new infection.

[More evidence that COVID infection brings long-term heart risks](#) (HealthDay News, Feb. 10, 2022)

WashU Med clinical epidemiologist Ziyad Al-Aly, MD, recently published a study in Nature Medicine that determined COVID-19 patients are at increased risk of chronic heart conditions — such as heart rhythm problems, blood clots, strokes and heart failure — for at least a year after infection.

[Researchers unravel omicron's secrets to better understand COVID-19](#) (WashU Med News, Feb. 9, 2022)

Researchers at WashU Med, led by Michael Diamond, MD, PhD, have found evidence that the omicron variant causes less severe disease than previous variants — at least in rodents — but that many antibody-based therapies may not be effective against it.

## Resources

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