

WashU Med COVID-19 Update

April 7, 2020

Information for School of Medicine faculty, staff and students

Current COVID-19 stats

At BJH, there are currently **68** inpatients who are confirmed positive and **32** admitted patients under investigation (PUIs), which means that results are pending.

BJH and WUSM sterilize N95s for safe extended use



A team of BJH and Washington University experts in infection prevention, environmental health and safety, comparative medicine and engineering came

together to design a process for sterilizing respirators using vaporized hydrogen peroxide (VHP). This allows N95 respirator masks to be collected, sterilized and then returned to the original user.

VHP is a proven process used in Washington University laboratories for sterilizing equipment and spaces. Currently only a few U.S. hospitals are using this process to sterilize respirators.

To test and learn, the team started by working with the BJH Emergency Department, and after initial success, have added other areas. The plan is to eventually use this process across BJH, and potentially include all BJC hospitals. As the effort expands, staff will receive instructions about how the respirators are collected and returned for each shift.

Neurointensive care unit modified for COVID-19 patients



From left: John Lynch, MD, chief medical officer and chief operating officer at

Barnes-Jewish Hospital; Paul Scheel, MD, chief executive officer of Washington University Physicians; and Sam Bhayani, MD, chief medical officer of Washington University Physicians, visit a neurointensive care unit at Barnes-Jewish Hospital that is being converted to receive severely ill patients with COVID-19. The additional ICU beds are part of the hospital's and School of Medicine's joint planning effort to provide specialized care for growing numbers of patients with COVID-19.

Clinical trial evaluates effectiveness of COVID-19 blood plasma as treatment

The School of Medicine is participating in a clinical trial evaluating whether antibodies in the blood plasma of people who have recovered from COVID-19 can effectively treat hospitalized patients who are severely ill. People who have had a positive COVID-19 test and have been symptom-free for 14 days are invited to participate in the clinical trial by donating plasma.

- In the St. Louis area: Send an email to IDCRU@wustl.edu
- Outside of the St. Louis area: Visit ccpp19.org to join the national plasma donation registry

For more information about the rationale for this investigational treatment, [please read this article](#) on the School of Medicine website.

Why washing your hands and social distancing work

Linda Eissenberg, an assistant professor of internal medicine, explains [the various ways coronavirus enters the body](#) in an op-ed published in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Eissenberg suggests that “understanding open and closed systems helps us to understand the social distancing advice... . A tightly closed system would be like astronauts in a space capsule where nothing and no one from the outside can get in. So minimizing contact achieves a more closed, less risky setting.” And she adds, “Just keep washing your hands whenever the relatively closed system is breached.” She has spent more than two decades studying microbial pathogens.

Student volunteers provide crisis services

WashU med student volunteers are providing a number of community resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as childcare for essential health-care workers, helping with food deliveries, managing a triage hotline and reviewing current academic research on the virus. To learn more about efforts or get involved, [visit the signup page](#).

For Medical Campus updates, visit coronavirus.med.wustl.edu »

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