

St. Louis Health Leaders Working Together to Respond to COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic brings unprecedented challenges to our region, front-line caregivers and administrative leaders from BJC HealthCare, Mercy, SSM Health and St. Luke's Hospital remain united in our mission to support the St. Louis community. We are working in close partnership with local and state health departments and our academic medical institutions, Saint Louis University and Washington University Schools of Medicine.

We remain confident that knowledge, vigilance and cooperation will enable the St. Louis community to weather the COVID-19 pandemic together.

BJC, Mercy, SSM and St. Luke's are collaborating, with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and Missouri and Illinois health departments, to give community members access to factual, current information and quality care connected to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

COVID-19 testing

Testing is important to get a clear understanding of how COVID-19 is moving through the region, to reduce the risk of exposure in the community and to determine the appropriate level of care for patients who may be infected.

Following guidelines from the CDC, at this time only those who meet specific criteria will be tested for COVID-19 to make sure limited testing resources are available for those who need them most. Criteria for testing may change as community risk changes.

Should you be tested?

Call your health care provider, the local health department or local hospital to be screened for testing if:

- you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19: fever, cough or shortness of breath

AND

- you've traveled to an area with a known COVID-19 community outbreak within the past 14 days

OR

- you've been exposed to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19

Or take the virtual screening on SSM Health's site, [SSMHealth.com/covid19](https://www.ssmhealth.com/covid19).

BJC, Mercy, SSM and St. Luke's have set up drive-through testing sites in St. Louis City, St. Louis County, Franklin County and St. Charles County in Missouri and St. Clair County in Illinois for patients who have been screened and meet the criteria for testing. Collections are by pre-screening only.

**CALL BEFORE YOU VISIT
YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER,
HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
HOSPITAL OR TESTING SITE.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Social distancing

One of the most important tools to limit the spread of disease is "social distancing" — or increasing the physical space between people. Staying at least 6 feet away from others lowers your risk of getting COVID-19.

Some ways to practice social distancing include:

- working from home
- socializing online or on the phone
- canceling or postponing parties, reunions, trips or other social events
- avoiding the gym, playground, dog park or other places people congregate

Although it can be difficult mentally, physically and financially, limiting restaurants and bars to carry-out/curb service, closing some businesses, canceling festivals and events, and limiting social contact is proven to slow epidemics and save lives. And, as the situation unfolds, guidelines will continue to change.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON COVID-19 AND RELATED
ISSUES, CALL OR VISIT:

Missouri Department of Health 877-
435-8411

Illinois Department of Health
dph.illinois.gov/covid19

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)
[who.int/emergencies/diseases/
novel-coronavirus-2019](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

[bjc.org/coronavirus](https://www.bjc.org/coronavirus)
[mercy.net/covid19](https://www.mercy.net/covid19)
[ssmhealth.com](https://www.ssmhealth.com)
[stlukes-stl.com](https://www.stlukes-stl.com)

STEPS WE ARE TAKING

Hospital visitor policies

BJC, SSM, Mercy and St. Luke's have adjusted our policies to help protect patients, staff and visitors by limiting the number of people visiting a patient at one time. In addition, visitors to high-risk areas, such as oncology or transplant, may have additional restrictions.

Some of our larger facilities are limiting the number of entrances to the buildings.

Check the hospital's website (in the box below) or call before your planned visit to find the updated visitor policy. As the situation evolves, policies will likely continue to change.

Elective procedures and doctor visits

BJC, Mercy, SSM and St. Luke's are reducing the risk to patients by canceling or rescheduling elective surgery, procedures and screenings. An elective procedure is defined as one that can be postponed without causing harm to the patient.

Patients also will be asked to reschedule preventive and elective visits, such as yearly physicals, well-woman exams or routine follow-ups.

Many of our professionals are set up to provide telemedicine or online visits. Call your provider's office or visit their website to see if this is an option.

Pulling together

As health care leaders, we are working with a sense of calm caution on behalf of our patients, visitors and each other by working with our employees regarding travel restrictions and screening, canceling or postponing events, and encouraging team members to use technology to virtually attend meetings and stay connected with colleagues in other parts of the country.

Together we can minimize the risk and keep the St. Louis area strong in the face of this challenge. Your cooperation matters.