

RESEARCH NEWS

 Washington University in St. Louis

Guidance for Research Laboratories During Current COVID-19 Surge

As the number of new SARS Co-V 2 cases are at an all-time high in our community, it is more important than ever to follow mitigation procedures in the lab. At this time, the guidance already in place has not changed. The current recommendations can be found at: <https://research.wustl.edu/covid19/lab-research-ramp-up/>

Two points of emphasis:

1. Surgical/isolation (3-ply disposable) masks are recommended.
2. Eating and drinking with others is the major activity that has resulted in transmission on campus. Please ensure that lab members to not congregate for breaks, allow adequate spacing, and limit their time together.

Guidance for Clinical Research During Current COVID-19 Surge

As everyone knows, the number of new cases of SARS Co-V 2 infection in the community is at an all-time high, and the hospital and medical center are under significant pressure as cases requiring hospital care rises to previously unseen levels.

We need to minimize the risk to staff and patients to ensure that potential exposure to infected individuals on the campus can be avoided.

At this point, we do not wish to suspend clinical research activities on the campus. However, we would ask all principal investigators to review their current studies and adjust them where possible to reduce in-person visits on the campus.

- If it is possible to defer a research visit for at least 4 weeks, please do.
- All research that can be done remotely should be done remotely. If a virtual visit can replace an in-person visit please do so.
- Remind all research participants to contact study staff if they have any symptoms. All participants and research staff must be screened for symptoms prior to any visit. Symptomatic individuals should not be seen unless it is absolutely necessary from a clinical perspective.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn, with specific requirements dependent on the nature of the research. At a minimum, both research staff and participants must wear a surgical isolation mask during all in-person visits.
- Physical distancing remains a critical consideration and attention should be paid to spacing in waiting areas etc.
- The presence of research participants and research staff in clinical spaces should be minimized and considered in the context of the clinical needs for other patients and staff in the area.

Thank you for your patience as we move through the pandemic. The OVCR will monitor the current surge and will change the guidance as needed.

Sincerely,

Mark Lowe, MD, PhD
Interim Vice Chancellor for Research