

To the Johns Hopkins Medicine community

Dear Colleagues,

Due to an increase of COVID-19 infections from the newest omicron variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, effective Monday, May 2, Johns Hopkins Medicine will resume the universal masking requirement in all JHM buildings, and will continue to require universal masking at Sibley Memorial Hospital, where the requirement had not changed. All JHM personnel will be required to wear a surgical, procedural or cloth face mask in all areas of JHM buildings. This change impacts fully vaccinated personnel who, since March 9, have had the option to remain unmasked in nonclinical buildings and private areas of clinical buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of encountering a patient, care partner or member of the public.

Reinstating universal masking will help us continue to protect the health and safety of our personnel, patients and visitors, and will help maintain staffing levels in JHM facilities despite increased COVID-19 incidence and unseasonal circulation of other respiratory viruses in our communities.

What has changed:

- Masking is required for all JHM personnel, regardless of vaccination status, in all JHM locations, both in clinical and in nonclinical areas. This includes areas where there is no reasonable expectation of encountering a patient or the public, such as shared offices, work rooms, conference spaces, break rooms, pharmacy work rooms, storerooms and laboratory spaces. The only exceptions to the masking requirement are when someone is alone in a private office with the door closed or while eating or drinking in group settings.
- Physical distancing is required for all JHM personnel, regardless of vaccination status, whenever masks are removed indoors to eat or drink around other people. We continue to see exposures and viral transmission among our personnel when eating and drinking in close contact in group settings. Therefore, minimize the time that masks are removed to eat and drink around others, and practice physical distancing during these times.

We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust other elements of COVID-19 guidance and precautions as needed to protect the health and safety of our patients, our workforce and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Gabe Kelen, M.D., F.R.C.P.(C.), F.A.C.E.P.
Director, Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response (CEPAR)
Director, Department of Emergency Medicine
The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System

Lisa Maragakis, M.D., M.P.H.
Senior Director of Healthcare Epidemiology and Infection Prevention
Johns Hopkins Health System

Robert Carter, M.S.N., R.N., C.F.R.N., C.P.E.N., N.R.P., C.H.E.P.
Senior Director
Johns Hopkins Medicine Office of Emergency Management