

# COVID-19

A message from Ballad Health Corporate  
Emergency Operations Center (CEOC)



**>> PLEASE CASCADE TO ALL TEAM MEMBERS.<<**

**TO:** Ballad Health Incident Commanders  
**FROM:** Ballad Health Corporate Emergency Operations Center  
**DATE:** May 7, 2021  
**TITLE:** Updated COVID-19 prevention guidelines  
**ACTION:** Please cascade to all team members

Following the recent lifting of some public health requirements and national guidance changes regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we want to be sure all Ballad Health team members, physicians, vendors and volunteers are apprised of the latest updates to remain safe.

Please take a few minutes to catch up on guidelines in place at Ballad Health.

## **Masks and face coverings**

**A well-fitting cloth mask, facemask or respirator for source control are still required in all Ballad Health facilities.** This is a crucial measure that protects our patients, team members, physicians and visitors while we work towards greater numbers of participation in COVID-19 community vaccination efforts.

If you see a team member or guest without a mask, please be empowered to speak up and remind them to Mask Up while they're on site.

We still encourage everyone to practice physical distancing and wear masks in public – even when they're not required.

## **Unit logs and daily team member screenings**

The daily screening process for team members has been updated. Please note changes in red below.

**Ballad Health still requires all team members, physicians and volunteers to conduct a symptom check upon arrival to work. As of Monday, May 10, daily temperature monitoring is no longer required.** Please see supporting screening guide enclosed along with this memo.

Each team member should be asked the following three questions upon arrival to work:

- 1. Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 10 days?*
- 2. Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19 including cough, shortness of breath or fever?*

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- 3. Have you been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or been advised to quarantine due to a COVID-19 exposure in the last 14 days? Please note that caring for COVID-19 patients while wearing the appropriate PPE is not considered an exposure.*

If a team member answers, “YES” to any of these questions, they should contact their supervisor immediately.

Each unit should be maintaining a 30-day log of team members’ symptoms.

## Visitation

The daily screening process for visitors has been updated, however, there are no other changes to the Ballad Health visitation policy since the March 12 guidelines. Please note changes in red.

- **All visitors will be screened and will be expected to provide and wear their own cloth face covering. As of Monday, May 10, daily temperature monitoring is no longer required.** Please see supporting screening guide enclosed along with this memo.
- Each visitor should be asked the following four questions upon arrival to any Ballad Health facility:
  - 1. Have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 10 days?*
  - 2. Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19 including cough, shortness of breath or fever?*
  - 3. Have you been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or been advised to quarantine in the last 14 days?*
  - 4. Are you seeking care?*
    - a. If YES, guide them to the emergency department.*
    - b. If NO, encourage visitor to return home, call Nurse Connect at 833-822-5523, and choose to visit on another day when they are symptom free. If that is not possible to return on a different day, i.e. end-of-life visit, please contact security and ask the visitor to stand aside from the line. Security will contact the corresponding nursing unit leaders or house supervisor, if needed. Complete the Refusal of Medical Screening Examination Log.*
- **Visitors are screened and admitted to facilities from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily. One visitor may remain with the patient overnight, and this visitor must be in the facility prior to 8 p.m. Visitors who remain with the patient after 8 p.m. will stay in the patient room. If the visitor remaining with the patient after 8 p.m. leaves the facility at any point in the night, the visitor will not be permitted re-entry until 8 a.m.** Each facility will determine the mechanism for ensuring two visitors per patient. Please refer visitors to VIP policy to insure the role of the

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visitor is clear.

- Inpatients who have tested positive for COVID-19 or patients who are under investigation will be allowed TWO visitors per a once-a-day, designated two-hour visitation period. The specific time of day for the visitation period for COVID-19 positive/PUI patients will be arranged with the healthcare team of the hospitalized patient's unit. Exceptions to this include end-of-life situations.
- For outpatient testing procedures, Ballad Health will permit TWO visitors per patient to accompany the patient. Visitors may be required to wait in the designated procedure waiting area while the patient is receiving the outpatient testing.
- TWO visitors are permitted to accompany a patient in the emergency room or pediatric emergency rooms.
- For patients undergoing a procedure or surgery, Ballad Health will permit TWO designated visitors/support persons. The visitors with the surgical patients must remain in the designated waiting room location while the patient is in the surgical procedure.
- For laboring/obstetric patients, ONE support person and TWO visitors will be permitted. A doula is considered part of the care team and not considered the visitor.
- For NICU, PEDS and PICU patients, TWO parents or legal guardians will be permitted. Hours of visitation are not restricted in these areas.
- Visitation in behavioral health units is permitting in some circumstances. Details vary by location. Please contact facility leadership for further information.
- Visitation in long-term care environment is limited to TWO individuals per resident, with additional limitation of the visit to not exceed two hours, and the visitation must be scheduled with the facility leadership.
- Certain exceptions for visitation will be made at the discretion of nursing leadership for end-of-life, comfort care and critical care patients.
- No visitors under 18 are allowed unless they qualify for an approved extenuating circumstance.

## **Communal activities and dining for healthcare workers (HCW)**

In general, fully vaccinated HCW should continue to wear source control while at work. However, fully vaccinated HCW may dine and socialize together in break rooms and conduct in-person meetings without source control or physical distancing.

If unvaccinated HCW are present, **everyone** should wear source control and unvaccinated HCW should physically distance from others.

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## Vaccines

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for nearly everyone over the age of 16. Shots are safe, effective, free of charge and widely accessible to everyone over the age of 16.

Ballad Health operates four community vaccination centers (CVCs):

- **Johnson City**  
The Mall at Johnson City, Main Entrance, across from Forever 21  
2011 N. Roan Street, Suite H26  
Monday – Friday, 2 – 7 PM
- **Kingsport**  
Indian Path Community Hospital, Building 2205  
2205 Pavilion Drive  
Monday – Thursday, 2 – 7 PM
- **Abingdon**  
611 Campus Drive  
Tuesday and Thursday, 8 AM – 4 PM
- **Norton**  
Mountain View Regional Hospital  
3<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW  
Thursday, 9 AM – 4 PM

**Walk-ins are welcome at all CVCs** or you may schedule an appointment by calling Ballad Health Nurse Connect at 833-822-5523. Online scheduling for eligible patients is also available on the health system's main webpage at [www.balladhealth.org](http://www.balladhealth.org) and its COVID-19 page at [www.balladhealth.org/COVID19](http://www.balladhealth.org/COVID19).

Community members must bring a photo ID when they arrive for their vaccine, and healthcare workers should bring their work ID badge. Second doses will be scheduled when patients check in, and everyone must be observed for at least 15 minutes after receiving the shot to monitor for any possible side effects. Sixteen- and 17-year olds must have a parent or guardian with them at all Ballad Health CVCs.

**If you have questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine, please speak with a trusted healthcare professional or team member.**

## Travel

All team members should continue taking precautions while traveling, remaining aware of risks and transmission levels.

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Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread COVID-19, and to that end, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends delaying domestic and international travel until individuals are fully vaccinated.

**Vaccinated people can travel safely within the United States – they do not need to get tested before or after travel, and they do not need to self-quarantine.**

International travel poses additional risks, and even fully vaccinated travelers are at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading new COVID-19 variants. Ballad Health follows all CDC recommendations for international travel for fully vaccinated individuals, which includes testing three-five days after returning. You do not need to get tested before departure, or self-quarantine after returning.

All travelers – international and domestic – should follow infection prevention guidelines such as wearing a mask, staying 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds and practicing hand hygiene.

Full travel guidelines are available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

## Testing

A low threshold for testing is important, so we can gauge the virus spread in our communities. If you're experiencing symptoms, even if they're mild or appear to be allergies, please schedule a testing appointment as soon as possible. **All Ballad Health COVID-19 testing provides same-day results.**

Anyone who is experiencing symptoms and believes they might have been exposed to COVID-19 is advised to call Ballad Health Nurse Connect at [833-822-5523](tel:833-822-5523). Community members can also schedule COVID-19 testing online by visiting [www.balladhealth.org](http://www.balladhealth.org) or through the Ballad Health mobile app.

## CEOC activity suspended

All regular activity in the Ballad Health Corporate Emergency Operations Center, including weekly media briefings, has been suspended. A weekly COVID-19 Scorecard will be released on Wednesdays with the latest local information so that we can continue to keep our community informed.

The email account, [BalladHealthCorporateEOC@balladhealth.org](mailto:BalladHealthCorporateEOC@balladhealth.org), will continue to be monitored 24/7 for inquires and activity, and all COVID-19 news and updates will be shared to [www.balladhealth.org/COVID19](http://www.balladhealth.org/COVID19).

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