

COVID-19 Health System Updates, May 12

May 12, 2021, Wednesday

As you probably know, the Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization on Monday to allow the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to be given to children between 12 and 15 years old. The data submitted by Pfizer showed that the vaccine was 100 percent effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 in that age group.

A couple more steps are needed at the federal and state levels before we can actually start giving the vaccine to this age group. As soon as we get those green lights, we will start scheduling appointments for children who are at least 12 years old. We hope that will happen very soon, and I will keep you posted.

Regardless of exactly when it happens, this is another important step toward the end of the pandemic. While children in that age group typically do not get severe COVID-19, they can transmit it to others who are more vulnerable. Vaccinating these children will protect not only them, but everyone around them.

If you have children in that age group, I hope you'll consider getting them vaccinated when you're able. Once New York State lets us know they are eligible to be vaccinated, you'll be able to use [this link](#) to schedule them at Mount Sinai, and most other vaccine sites that offer the Pfizer vaccine will be happy to help as well. (Please **do not** try to schedule them until we get the OK.)

As of this morning, we had 105 COVID-19-positive inpatients across the system, 24 of whom were in critical care. The New York State seven-day average test positivity rates as of yesterday were 1.2 percent for New York City and Long Island, and 1.3 percent for the mid-Hudson region.

Changes in Employee Testing Program

Starting Monday, May 17, Employee Health Services (EHS) will be offering COVID-19 PCR tests to asymptomatic employees. Employees without COVID-19 symptoms are eligible for one COVID-19 PCR test per month through EHS, at any of the six hospital-based EHS locations during their normal weekday business hours:

- Testing will not be offered at the 42nd Street Corporate Services Center EHS office.
- New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai employees can be tested at Mount Sinai Beth Israel.
- Mount Sinai South Nassau's EHS location is only for Mount Sinai South Nassau employees.

Testing is by appointment only; appointments must be made through [this link](#). (Mount Sinai South Nassau employees should call 516-255-8445.)

The employee test sites at The Mount Sinai Hospital/Ross Park and the Upper West Side/Ansonia will be closed after the end of this week.

Employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should continue to report their symptoms to EHS by completing this [survey](#). A member of the EHS team will follow up and arrange for testing as needed.

Study on COVID-19 and Pregnancy

How does COVID-19 affect mothers and their babies? Data are still very limited, and a study at Mount Sinai—which has recruited 2,500 patients so far—is seeking to remedy that. The study is known as “Generation C,” because it is focused on mothers facing the challenges of COVID-19. “We are looking at the impact and timing of SARS-CoV-2 infection and the development of COVID-19 on acute and severe complications,” says Joanne Stone, MD, Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science, and Director of Maternal Fetal Medicine, who is co-Principal Investigator of the study with Siobhan Dolan, MD, MPH, Vice Chair for Research, and Director of Genetics and Genomics, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science.

The team is testing participants' plasma samples at each trimester of pregnancy and at delivery for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. It is also examining the mothers' electronic medical records, obtaining data on complications such as miscarriage, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and sepsis, in addition to data on fetal growth, birth weight, and preterm birth.

"This virus will be among us for a while," says co-investigator Veerle Bergink, MD, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, and Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Science, "and it is good to have real-life data on the effects of COVID-19, especially in vulnerable groups, like pregnant women and high-risk populations." Read more about the study, and see some amazing baby pictures, [here](#).

As we put this COVID-19 surge further behind us, we may soon scale back the frequency of these updates. But please know that my respect and appreciation for you is undiminished. We are where we are today because of your hard work at caring for and vaccinating our patients, our loved ones, and each other. It remains the honor of my life to wear the Mount Sinai badge with all of you.

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