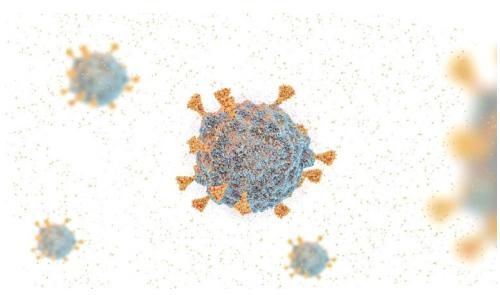


Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know

Courtesy: CDC

What We Know about Omicron

The Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is present in all 50 states and is causing the majority of new COVID-19 cases in the United States.



Spread

Based on data from other countries and the recent surge in cases in the U.S., we know that Omicron spreads more easily than the original COVID-19 virus. Scientists are still working to determine Omicron's exact level of transmission but estimate that it proliferates several times more quickly than the Delta variant – which was up to two times as contagious as the original virus.

The CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or don't have symptoms.

New science demonstrates that most of the Omicron transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the one to two days prior to onset of symptoms and the two to three days after.

Severe Illness

More data are needed to understand the relationship between Omicron infection, including reinfections and breakthrough infections, and severe illness or death. This is because data on hospitalizations and deaths lag data on new infections by about two weeks.

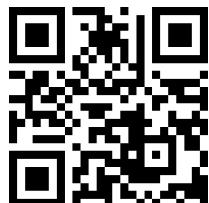
Early data from South Africa, the United Kingdom and the U.S. suggest a lower risk of hospitalization and death from Omicron compared to other COVID-19 variants.

Although Omicron's hospitalization-to-case ratio is lower than Delta's, the new variant's highly contagious nature means it is still dangerous. Because it is causing record levels of new infections, Omicron is filling hospitals in Illinois and across the U.S. Most hospitalized patients are unvaccinated.

Vaccines

The emergence of Omicron further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters.

Data from South Africa and the United Kingdom demonstrate that two doses of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine provide a 35% rate of protection against Omicron infection. A COVID-19 vaccine booster dose restores vaccine effectiveness against Omicron infection to 75%.



Learn more about the Omicron variant: tinyurl.com/mryh8jfd

We Have the Tools to Fight Omicron

Prevention is our best option: get vaccinated, get boosted, wear a mask in public indoor settings and take a test before you gather.

Vaccines: Vaccination is the best way to protect people from COVID-19. The CDC strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 5 years and older and boosters for everyone eligible.



Masks: Masks offer protection against all variants. Chicago and Illinois require individuals to wear masks indoors in public.



Testing: Tests can tell you if you are currently infected with COVID-19. If you learn that you are infected, even if you have no symptoms, stay home and isolate from others.



Learn more:

If you are sick or caring for someone:

tinyurl.com/2p933s6h



Where to get a COVID-19 vaccine:

vaccine.gov

