



## Omicron variant fast facts

*updated Nov. 29, 2021*

### Viruses like SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, mutate or change constantly.

On Nov. 24, 2021, the World Health Organization identified the latest variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and assigned it the Greek letter Omicron. The Omicron variant appears to be more transmissible than the Delta variant and contains many mutations that raise concern for reduced vaccine effectiveness.

### At this time, the Omicron variant is actively being studied by scientists all over the world.

- **Transmissibility:** While the Omicron variant appears to be more transmissible than the Delta variant, we do not yet know how much more.
- **Disease severity:** No unusual symptoms have been reported following Omicron infection, though it is still too early to determine if it causes more severe disease.
- **Vaccine effectiveness:** It is unknown at this time how effective vaccines will be against severe infection caused by Omicron. This is actively being investigated by scientists worldwide. If needed, Moderna and Pfizer can quickly update their vaccines to improve protection against infection caused by Omicron.
- **Treatment:** It is unknown at this time how effective treatments will be against infection caused by Omicron. This is actively being investigated by scientists worldwide.

### We know how to protect ourselves and others against infection.

We expect news of Omicron's emergence has caused many people to experience anxiety about the unknown. We can all control how we respond.

- Get vaccinated if you're not. Vaccination remains the best protection against serious illness and transmission.
- If you're eligible for a booster, make your appointment today.

- Wear a mask in indoor public settings or outdoor crowded settings.
- Keep a physical distance from people outside your home if you don't know their vaccination status.
- Wash hands frequently.

## **Oregon Health Authority is monitoring Omicron closely.**

Oregon has one of the most robust variant surveillance systems in the United States.

**As we learn more, we will quickly share information on how you can best protect yourself and keep your loved ones and your community safe.**

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