



KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



COUNTY OF KENT

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STATE OF MARYLAND

New SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern Identified-Omicron: Recommendations for the Public

December 2, 2021- Omicron, a new SARS-CoV-2 variant, has been identified in many countries and categorized as a Variant of Concern by the U.S. government and the World Health Organization (WHO). Because little is known about Omicron currently, it is important for the public health and medical communities as well as the general public to remain vigilant to reduce potential exposure.

Layered prevention strategies should be used to reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, including variants such as Delta and Omicron. These strategies include vaccination, masking, improving ventilation, distancing, handwashing, and testing to slow SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

- CDC recommends that **everyone ages 2 years or older** wear masks in public indoor places in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#). The level of **community transmission in Kent County, MD is HIGH**. Unvaccinated people should wear masks regardless of community transmission level.
- Persons who have a [close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19, should get tested 5-7 days after exposure (even if they are asymptomatic) and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative. Persons who develop symptoms of COVID-19 should get [tested](#) and [stay home](#) until their test result is negative; persons who have a positive test result should isolate at home for 10 days.

Vaccination remains vital to COVID-19 pandemic control. The COVID-19 vaccines approved or authorized in the United States are highly effective at preventing severe disease and death from the Delta variant, which is currently the dominant variant circulating in the U.S. CDC recommends that **everyone ages 5 and older** should be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. In addition, CDC recommends all persons age 18 years and older receive a booster dose [at the recommended interval](#). CDC will provide updates as soon as more information is available about vaccine effectiveness against the Omicron variant.

“We will continue to learn more about the new Omicron variant and share more information as it becomes available. The bottom line is that we need to remain vigilant. I urge everyone to follow the CDC’s advice,” stated Bill Webb, Kent County Health Officer. “If you haven’t already, get vaccinated, and if you are eligible, get your booster. And while we have substantial or high levels of covid community transmission, everyone over age 2 should wear a mask in indoor public settings regardless of your vaccination status.”

The CDC recommends **everyone over age 18** get their booster dose if it has been 6 months or more since your 2-dose Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or 2 months since you got your 1-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. All vaccines, including booster doses are free.

For more information, including finding a vaccine clinic site, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus, covidlink.maryland.gov or kenthd.org

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