**Omicron** - B.1.1.529

**Spread:** May spread more easily than other variants, including Delta.

**Severe illness and death:** Due to the small number of cases, the current severity of illness and death associated with this variant is unclear.

**Vaccine:** Breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated are expected, but vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Early evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Omicron variant can spread the virus to others. *All FDA-approved or authorized vaccines are expected to be effective against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths.* The recent emergence of the Omicron variant further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters.

**Treatments:** Some *monoclonal antibody treatments* may not be as effective against infection with Omicron.
1. **New variants of the virus are expected to occur.** Taking measures to reduce the spread of infection, including getting a COVID-19 vaccine, are the best ways to slow the emergence of new variants.

2. **Vaccines reduce your risk** of severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.

3. **COVID-19 booster doses are recommended** for individuals who are 16 years or older.

4. **Wearing a mask** is an effective way to reduce the spread of earlier forms of the virus, the Delta variant, and other known variants.
   - People who are not fully vaccinated should take steps to protect themselves, including wearing a mask indoors in public at all levels of community transmission. And delay their travel until fully vaccinated.
   - People who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask indoors in areas of substantial or high transmission.
People who are not fully vaccinated should take steps to protect themselves, including wearing a mask indoors in public at all levels of community transmission. And delay their travel until fully vaccinated.

People who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask indoors in areas of substantial or high transmission. Get tested 1-3 before your trip.

Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth is required in indoor areas of public transportation (including airplanes) and indoors in U.S. transportation hubs (including airports).

Travelers 2 years of age or older should wear a mask in indoor public places if:

- Not fully vaccinated,
- In an area with substantial or high COVID-19 transmission,
- Fully vaccinated with weakened immune systems, and
- WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN OR USE SANITIZER (W/ at least 60% alcohol)
- Do not travel if you have been exposed to COVID-19, you are sick, or if you test positive for COVID-19.
- If you are not fully vaccinated and must travel, get tested both before and after your trip.
5. **International Travel Requirements** have changed with testing requirements

- If you plan to travel internationally, you will need to get a COVID-19 viral test (regardless of vaccination status or citizenship) no more than 1 day before you travel by air into the United States. You must show your negative result to the airline before you board your flight.

- **CDC continues to recommend that all travelers get a COVID-19 viral test 3-5 days after arrival, and those unvaccinated travelers should quarantine for 7 days after travel.**

6. **Any Travel - Do NOT travel if:**

- You have been exposed to COVID-19, unless you are fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days.

- You are sick.

- You tested positive for COVID-19 and haven’t ended isolation (even if you are fully vaccinated).

Upcoming County Vaccination Clinics

First Doses for 5-11 y.o. Pediatric Residents (by Appointment)
• Monday through Friday (3pm – 7pm)
  • Silver Spring Civic Building or Dennis Ave Health Center
  • Montgomery College Germantown
  • East County Community Recreation Center
• Sunday (10am – 6pm)
  • Briggs Chaney Middle School
  • Francis Scott Key Middle School
  • Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School
  • Rocky Hill Middle School
  • Takoma Park Middle School

2nd Doses for 5-11 y.o. Pediatric Residents (by Appointment)
• Wednesday (3:30pm – 6:30pm) 5 Elementary Schools
• Saturday (10am – 6pm) 3 Middle Schools

Adult Doses (1st, 2nd, 18+ Boosters)
• Monday through Friday (10am – 2:30pm)
  • Silver Spring Civic Building or Dennis Ave Health Center
  • Montgomery College Germantown
  • East County Community Recreation Center
• Saturday (10am – 6pm)
  • Montgomery College Germantown
  • Paint Branch High School
• Tuesday through Sunday
  • Working to bring Lakeforest Mall Clinic indoors

Use Maryland’s Vaccine Locator
See County-run Clinics | Make Appointments
HHS has begun to receive Abbott Binax NOW COVID-19 rapid tests from MDH and County orders with Abbott. These include clinically administered versions and the Over The Counter (“Take Home”) tests. Some of these tests have been distributed at our testing sites over the past two weeks to reduce wait times around the holiday. We are also working on distributing the remaining tests through County partners working with populations who would proportionately benefit from At Home Testing.

- Minority Health Initiative & Primary Care Coalition Clinical Partners
- Populations served at Community HUBs
- Licensed Childcare Workers
- Crisis Center clients
- Homebound
- Department of Corrections
- Food Assistance Recipients
- Frontline Service Industry