

CDC Statement on B.1.1.529 (Omicron variant)

Media Statement

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Contact: [Media Relations](#)

(404) 639-3286

On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified a new variant, B.1.1.529, as a Variant of Concern and has named it Omicron. No cases of this variant have been identified in the U.S. to date. CDC is following the details of this new variant, first reported to the WHO by South Africa. We are grateful to the South African government and its scientists who have openly communicated with the global scientific community and continue to share information about this variant with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and CDC. We are working with other U.S. and global public health and industry partners to learn more about this variant, as we continue to monitor its path.

CDC is continuously monitoring variants and the U.S. variant surveillance system has reliably detected new variants in this country. We expect Omicron to be identified quickly, if it emerges in the U.S.

We know what it takes to prevent the spread of COVID-19. CDC recommends people follow [prevention strategies](#) such as wearing a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high [community transmission](#), washing your hands frequently, and physically distancing from others. CDC also recommends that everyone 5 years and older protect themselves from COVID-19 by getting [fully vaccinated](#). CDC encourages a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose for those who are eligible.

Travelers to the U.S. should continue to follow [CDC recommendations for traveling](#).

CDC will provide updates as more information becomes available.

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