

News Brief

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Health Experts Warn COVID-19 Cases May Rise Due to New BA.2 Variant

COVID-19 cases have trended down in the United States since a [peak of infections in January 2022](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Now, health experts warn of a potential uptick of infections in the coming months due to the emergence of BA.2—a new variant of Omicron, which was the leading variant causing COVID-19 cases during the coronavirus pandemic’s spike in infections this winter.

According to [data from the CDC](#), BA.2 makes up over half of the current COVID-19 cases in the United States. This number has consistently grown, and experts warn that this trend is likely to continue. Globally, BA.2 is the most common variant circulating, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Health experts suggest there is no evidence that the BA.2 variant causes more severe illness than the coronavirus Omicron variant. However, the new variant is thought to be more transmissible, creating concerns about its ability to spread more quickly.

At this time, experts recommend primary vaccination and booster shots as a critical measure to protect against BA.2. Health officials continue to learn more about the variant, such as how well antibodies from previous COVID-19 infections protect against reinfection.

“The variant has been in the United States for about the past two months and it has been slowly increasing in proportion compared to BA.1 [Omicron].”

—CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky

What This Means

Due to the United States’ downward trend of infection cases, COVID-19-related guidance and restrictions have been loosened at many federal, state and local levels. In turn, many organizations have also relaxed their respective workplace COVID-19 safety precautions.

It remains to be seen if the emergence of the BA.2 variant will cause an uptick of COVID-19 cases in the coming months, prompting a return to stricter guidance for COVID-19 prevention measures. As such, employers should remain agile and continue to prioritize safety within the workplace.

To inform workplace safety practices, employers should continue to stay apprised of developments surrounding the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic and monitor guidance from local and state officials.

Evolution of Benefits will keep you updated of any noteworthy developments.

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