



Public Health Brief

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH

Public Health Officer

Office: 530-694-2146, Ext 249

e-mail: rjohnson@alpinecountyca.gov

Nichole Williamson

HHS Director

Office: 530-694-2235

24/7/365 Emergency Contact Number

Dispatch: 530-694-2231, Ext 330



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OMICRON VARIANT UPDATE

Note: Although I will not continue to announce each new case, I thought this one is important. It emphasizes the fact that this person did not travel out of the USA, which indicates exposure in our country. The Omicron variant is likely to be spreading extensively throughout the USA, and you can expect continued reports of new cases in new locations. What should you do? See the following:

COVID-19 and the Omicron variant

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19, including the variant, is to get vaccinated and boosted

Dated: 12/1/2021



Answer to Tough Questions About Public Health:

[FAQ - Public Health Communication Collaborative \(publichealthcollaborative.org\)](http://publichealthcollaborative.org)



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Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

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District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

Infected Minnesota resident recently returned from domestic travel; variant was found through MDH variant surveillance program, which is one of the strongest surveillance programs in the nation

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) today announced that its Public Health Laboratory has found the variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus known as Omicron in a specimen from a Minnesota resident with recent travel history to New York City.

The variant was found through the MDH variant surveillance program, which is one of the strongest surveillance programs in the nation. Having a robust virus surveillance system in place allowed MDH to quickly identify Omicron once it entered the state and made it more likely that Minnesota would be among the first states to find the variant.

“Since the beginning of this pandemic, Minnesota’s nation-leading genome sequencing infrastructure and strong testing network have allowed the state to quickly track the COVID-19 virus and better understand its spread. Today, those tools detected a case of the Omicron variant in Minnesota,” said Governor Tim Walz. “This news is concerning, but it is not a surprise. We know that this virus is highly infectious and moves quickly throughout the world. Minnesotans know what to do to keep each other safe now — get the vaccine, get tested, wear a mask indoors, and get a booster. Together, we can fight this virus and help keep Minnesotans safe.”

While Omicron is classified by the World Health Organization as a Variant of Concern, scientists are still working to determine how it may compare with the predominant Delta variant in terms of transmissibility and disease severity. Scientists also are studying the degree to which existing vaccines and therapies protect against Omicron.

According to Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm, this new finding underscores the importance of continued efforts by all Minnesotans to limit the spread of COVID-19 in any form.

“We still have more to learn about Omicron, but the most important thing we can do right now is to use the tools we have available to make it as hard as possible for this virus to spread,” Commissioner Malcolm said. “In addition to vaccination and boosters, we can slow the spread of this variant and all COVID-19 variants by using the tried-and-true prevention methods of wearing masks, staying home when sick, and getting tested when appropriate.”

The person with the Omicron variant is an adult male, is a resident of Hennepin County, and had been vaccinated. The person developed mild symptoms on Nov. 22 and sought COVID-19 testing on



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Nov. 24. The person's symptoms have resolved. The person spoke with MDH case investigators and reported traveling to New York City and attended the Anime NYC 2021 convention at the Javits Center from Nov. 19-21. The person was advised to isolate from others. Minnesota epidemiologists will continue to investigate in collaboration with New York City and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Meanwhile, health officials urge Minnesotans to take the following steps to protect against COVID-19, including variants like Omicron:

- Get vaccinated and if eligible get a booster.
- Wear well-fitting masks in indoor public settings and crowded outdoor settings.
- Get tested if you have symptoms, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, have traveled [as per guidelines](#) or have been in a setting where you may have been exposed.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Stay away from crowds.
- Improve ventilation in your home and workplace.
- Take extra care to avoid exposure to the virus if you have medical conditions or live with someone with medical conditions.

All questions about testing or COVID-19 vaccinations should be directed to me at:

530-694-2146, Option 1

[COVID-19 | Alpine County, CA - Official Website \(alpinecountyca.gov\)](https://www.alpinecountyca.gov/covid-19)

[COVID19.CA.GOV](https://www.covid19.ca.gov)

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)



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