CDC Update on Omicron Variant

CDC updates from December 05, 2021

What We Know about Omicron Infection and Spread

- **How easily does Omicron spread?** The Omicron variant likely will spread more easily than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but how easily Omicron spreads compared to Delta remains unknown. The CDC expects that anyone infected with the Omicron variant can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or don’t have symptoms.

- **Will Omicron cause more severe illness?** More data is needed to know if Omicron infections, and especially reinfections and breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated, cause more severe disease or death than infection with other variants.

- **Will vaccines work against Omicron?** Current vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. However, [breakthrough infections](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-omicron-variant.html) in people who are fully vaccinated are likely to occur. With other variants, like Delta, vaccines have remained effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. The recent emergence of Omicron further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters.

- **Will treatments work against Omicron?** Scientists are working to determine how well existing treatments for COVID-19 work. Based on the changed genetic make-up of Omicron, some treatments are likely to remain effective while others may be less effective.

CDC Science Brief on the Omicron Variant


“Currently, it is unknown how efficiently the Omicron variant can spread from person to person. The replacement of Delta by Omicron as the predominant variant in South Africa raises concerns that the Omicron variant may be more transmissible than Delta, but due to the low number of cases in South Africa when Omicron emerged, it is unclear if this variant is more transmissible than the Delta variant. Further, the relatively small number of cases documented to date makes it difficult to estimate transmissibility. Analysis of the changes in the spike protein indicate that the Omicron variant is likely to have increased transmission compared to the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but it is difficult to infer if it is more transmissible than Delta.”

WNE Booster Clinics Fall 2021 Semester

All clinics are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Center for Health and Wellness, CSP suite 235.
Use the QR code provided here to choose the date and time of your preferred appointment OR use the following link:

If you experience any issues with the online scheduling system for the booster clinics, please call Health Services at 413-782-1211. They will be happy to help troubleshoot and get you scheduled.

COVID-19 Virus Transmission Levels

Statewide Transmission Levels
A review of statewide data indicates that Massachusetts has seen an increase in the overall number of new cases. The positivity rate for the Commonwealth is currently 4.74%. Breakthrough infections are trending at 1.6%, and mortality among vaccinated individuals is trending at 0.01%. Massachusetts Interactive COVID-19 Dashboard.

Community Levels
CDC Data Tracker reports that transmission rates across Hampden County remain HIGH.
The positivity rate for Hampden County is currently 8.36%, and vaccines have increased to 68.9%.

**WNE Campus Levels**

As you review the data, you will notice that WNE is experiencing an uptick in COVID-19 activity. While expected, due to the Thanksgiving break and the high rates of transmission we are seeing across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is a critical reminder that we all need to do our part in maintaining our safety standards. This diligence is necessary to keep everyone healthy during this crucial time in the academic year. [WNE COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

If you have questions or concerns about this weekly update, contact Health Services at Healthservices@wne.edu or 413-782-1211.

And remember, Golden Bears, we’re in this together, and together we’ll keep each other safe.

Respectfully,

**Basil A. Stewart**
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Chair, Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT)

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