

UNMASK THE FACTS

January 17 - 31

January 28, 2022

A new variant of Omicron has emerged and begun to spread

Most Omicron cases have been caused by a variant that scientists refer to as BA.1; however, another variant called BA.2 is starting to draw attention. BA.2 has 32 of the same mutations as BA.1, but it also has 28 that are different. Some of these mutations might make it more contagious than BA.1. BA.2 has also been called "stealth omicron" because it can be harder to distinguish from the Delta variant. While known cases of BA.2 are low in the U.S., the variant is causing concern in several countries where the proportion of cases caused by BA.2 is rapidly increasing.

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January 31, 2022

FDA grants full approval of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine

The U.S. FDA granted Moderna full approval of their COVID-19 vaccine, called Spikevax. Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine has been available under emergency use authorization (EUA) for individuals 18 years of age and older since Dec. 18, 2020. The agency announced that the vaccine meets the FDA's rigorous standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality required for approval. Spikevax has the same formulation as the EUA Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine. It is administered as a primary series of two doses, one month apart.

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January 27, 2022

The U.S. faces the largest number of COVID-19-related deaths in nearly a year

The number of COVID-19 deaths this week has surpassed the peak number of deaths from the Delta surge. A seven-day average of 2,200 daily coronavirus-related deaths were recorded this week, which means that the U.S. is experiencing the highest number of COVID-19 related deaths since before the vaccine rollout. A [recent CDC report](#) shows that the Omicron variant causes less severe illness; however, the death count is soaring because Omicron spreads quickly and is infecting a higher proportion of people.

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January 27, 2022

CDC studies show the real-world effectiveness of COVID-19 booster shots

Three studies published by the CDC show that a COVID-19 booster shot provides the best protection against the Omicron variant. [One of the studies](#) found that the booster shot was 90% effective at preventing COVID-19-associated emergency department or urgent care visits and hospitalizations during both the Delta and Omicron surges. All three studies found that unvaccinated people faced the highest risks of becoming sick with COVID-19. These findings highlight the importance of staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccination.

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January 28, 2022

Many eligible people have received a booster shot, but younger populations hesitate

According to a recent poll, 42% of the public (and 55% of all vaccinated adults) say they've received a COVID-19 booster dose. Among the population likely to be booster-eligible (those who either received a booster or completed a full initial course of vaccination at least 6 months ago), 7 in 10 (70%) have gotten a booster. This rises to 86% among those ages 65 and over and 77% among those ages 50-64 who are likely booster-eligible. Teens and young adults (18-29) are the least likely booster-eligible population to have received a booster shot (48%).

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Americares is a health-focused relief and development organization that responds to people affected by poverty or disaster with life-changing health programs, medicine, medical supplies and emergency aid.

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