



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Keep Your Guard Up Against Omicron

The World Health Organization has warned against describing the symptoms of the COVID-19 pandemic's highly infectious Omicron variant as being "mild," saying the variant is killing people around the world.

Simply put, COVID-19, regardless of the variant, is not a mild illness like the common cold.

Omicron is still dangerous to human health and passes more easily to others than previous variants, even among people who have had both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The problem is one of numbers. Even if patients with Omicron report milder symptoms than other variants of COVID-19, the variant causes so many more cases that it greatly increases the likelihood some people will require medical care.

Some of these cases can develop into severe illness requiring hospitalization, with potential for health complications that can lead to death.

Omicron is still a massive disruption to everybody's lives, even those indirectly impacted by it. These disruptions put lives at risk and have an impact on everyone, even those who have never had COVID-19.

With more people calling in sick there are increased work absences—including essential workers and health care staff—extended school closures; cancelled surgeries, backlogs of medical procedures, and other waitlists.



People who have completed their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines (two doses of the mRNA vaccines) are better protected from severe illness and hospitalization than those who are unvaccinated. Booster doses further improve protection.

Continued vigilance against COVID-19 by following all recommended public health measures is crucial for slowing the spread of Omicron and containing and ending the pandemic:

- **Get vaccinated** with your primary series and your booster dose when it is offered to you.
- **Vaccinate your kids** (all children aged five years and older are eligible).
- Stay home if you're feeling sick (even if feeling mildly ill).
- Reduce your number of contacts
- **Follow testing guidelines** (not everyone needs to be tested right now).
- Wash your hands.
- Wear a mask in public spaces.
- Maintain a physical distance with other people.