



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

December 14, 2021



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Public Health Advisory: Omicron Variant Update

Background

The new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 (B.1.1.529) continues to spread rapidly across the globe. On December 1st, the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the [first Omicron case](#) in the United States. While no Omicron cases have been detected yet in Marin, each day more cases are reported across the Bay Area.

Early research findings suggest that while Omicron is highly infectious, it has lower pathogenicity. Clinical trials are showing that primary vaccination against COVID-19 offers [partial protection](#), but a [booster dose](#) significantly increases immunoprotection.

In Marin County, we should expect to see a significant increase in COVID-19 infections over the coming weeks, especially among residents who have not received a booster dose.

CDC has updated travel recommendations and [requirements](#). Starting December 6, all air passengers, regardless of vaccination status, must show a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 1 day before travel to the United States. [Restrictions](#) on the entry of certain travelers into the United States also remain in effect. Today, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) also issued a [travel advisory](#). All returning domestic and international travelers to California, vaccinated and unvaccinated, should get tested for COVID-19 three to five days after travel.

Actions requested by Marin County Clinicians:

- Increase your vaccination and booster efforts to ensure your patients are protected. Appointments are also available at [GetVaccinatedMarin.org](#).
- Prioritize booster vaccinations for your patients who are age 55 or older if you are not able to offer access for all patients.
- Offer COVID-19 testing for returning travelers (international and out-of-state) 3 – 5 days after travel, per new CDPH standards.
- Obtain a travel history for all patients presenting with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- For any patients with compatible symptoms who have traveled internationally, contact Marin County Public Health by phone (415) 473-2957 or email COVID19CDLead@marincounty.org to review the case. If the case meets criteria, MCPH will assist in routing the specimen for whole genome sequencing (WGS).

References:

[CDPH Fact Sheet: Omicron Variant](#) (Updated December 1, 2021)

[CDC Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know](#) (Updated December 13, 2021)