

# Omicron's spread certain, but Its Full Threat Is Not

(온라인 헤딩: Scientists Are Racing to Gauge the Threat of Omicron)

By Emily Anthes  
Dec. 16, 2021

Even as scientists race to understand more about the Omicron variant and the threat it poses, one fact is abundantly clear: It spreads quickly everywhere it lands.

In South Africa, Omicron spread twice as fast as the highly infectious Delta variant. In Britain, officials have estimated that 200,000 people are becoming infected with Omicron every day. In Denmark, Omicron cases are doubling roughly every two days.

And early data from the United States suggest that Americans will not be spared. “No part of the country will be safe from Omicron,” said Shweta Bansal, a disease ecologist at Georgetown University.

Delta remains the dominant variant nationally and was driving a surge in cases and hospitalizations even before Omicron emerged. Roughly 120,000 new Covid cases are being reported every day, a 40 percent increase from two weeks ago.

But Omicron could soon overtake Delta, scientists said. Nationally, the share of cases caused by Omicron has increased to 2.9 percent from 0.4 percent in just a week, according to projections by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is far higher in some regions of the country.

projection 추정 산출 발사 투영

Researchers at one University of Washington lab have reported that the share of viral samples seeming to contain Omicron’s telltale pattern of mutations has jumped to 20 percent from 3 percent in a matter of days.

증거 누설(자)

In New York City, the test positivity rate has doubled in three days, [an adviser to the Mayor said](#) on Thursday, but officials don't yet know how many of those infections were caused by Omicron.

Still uncertain is how serious the consequences will be, as much remains unknown about the variant, including how likely it is to cause severe disease.

But the United States must redouble its fight against the virus, experts said. "I think we need to be prepared for the possibility that this could be at least as bad as any previous wave that we've seen," said Justin Lessler, an epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "We need to be thinking about what the plan is if things get bad."

Omicron is not only highly transmissible but also skilled at evading the immune system's defenses.

Breakthrough infections are common. This week, Denmark reported that three-quarters of its Omicron cases occurred in people who had received two vaccine doses. And [a recent outbreak](#) at Cornell University, where 97 percent of the population has [reportedly](#) been vaccinated, [may have been driven](#) by Omicron.

[reportedly](#) 전하는바에 의하면

There is no question that we're seeing some level of immune escape and re-infection," Dr. Lessler said. "Which means that the pool of people available to be infected with this virus is larger than it was before."