

- Variation (Biology) / Virus

OMICRON CAN SPREAD TO OTHERS IN JUST 15 SECONDS

The distance during conversation is crucial to the spread of the infection: WHO official

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MUSCAT: People should not take the Omicron variant of COVID-19 lightly, as it can infect healthy people in just 15 seconds.

According to Dr Jean Jabbour, the WHO representative to Oman, the distance at which two people stand and converse is crucial to the spread of the infection, If one of them is infected and gets closer to a healthy person than what is recommended, the risk is great.

Coronavirus variants

“If we are at a distance at which verbal communication is possible, this might transmit the virus to a healthy person within 15 seconds,” he explained. “This is why we insist on applying the public health measures, so that we can live with the virus, and live with its mutating variants, because this is important.”

“When it comes to viruses, it is important for every individual to know that there will be variants, and there will be a lot of mutations,” he said. “The characteristics, spread, infectivity and the severity of the virus differs between one variant and the other. Omicron, just like the Delta variant, is classified as a Variant of Concern, because they spread so quickly and their infectivity is high...it happens within a few seconds.”

Jabbour was speaking on COVID-19 during a wide-ranging interview with TTV, during which he also made another important point clear: The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, despite some people thinking otherwise.

“When there is a variant, and there is a quick spread, this does not mean we are reaching the end of the pandemic,” he revealed. “With viruses, this might happen. It is very premature to say that Omicron is the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the wrong perspective, and this is what makes the community ignore the simple health measures.

SPEAKING TO T TV, JEAN JABBOUR MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS FAR FROM OVER

Increasing incidence

“When this happens, numbers will increase again, you will have more admissions to hospitals, more admissions to intensive care units and more deaths,” Jabbour says. “Please take the measures seriously and apply them... even at family gatherings, not just in commercial places or in public areas,” Jabbour said.