- Variation (Biology) / Virus

How to Protect Yourself Against Omicron

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO REDUCE YOUR CHANCE OF GETTING SICK

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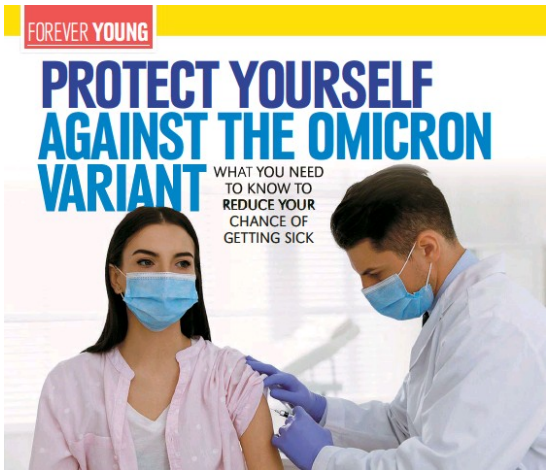
IT'S WORTH A SHOT The CDC recommends that everyone 5 years and older protect themselves from COVID-19 and its variants by getting fully vaccinated. "If you want to be optimally protected, absolutely get a booster," says Dr. Anthony Fauci. "Preliminary data show that when you get a booster... it raises the level of protection high enough that it then does do well against the omicron [variant]."



MASK UP "When you're in a congregate setting, particularly indoors with individuals where you don't know their vaccination status, wear a mask," says Dr. Fauci. "You can enjoy the family settings, particularly if everybody's vaccinated. We don't need to feel that we need to be cooped up and restricted in that regard. But be careful, be prudent."

GO FOR A TEST Because the vaccine's immune protection wanes over time, even fully vaccinated people are at risk of breakthrough infections — sometimes without any symptoms. According to the CDC, if you've been exposed to someone who may have been carrying the virus, get tested. Vaccinated people should get tested five to seven days after an exposure, while unvaccinated people should get tested right away and follow up with another test five to seven days later.

STAY VIGILANT Being in crowded places like restaurants and fitness centers puts you at higher risk for infection. Stay safe by avoiding indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air, and when indoors, open windows for better ventilation.

BE INFORMED "As we get more infections throughout the rest of the world, it might take longer to see what's the level of severity," says Dr. Fauci. So, it's important to keep informed about the latest guidance from federal, state and local health officials.