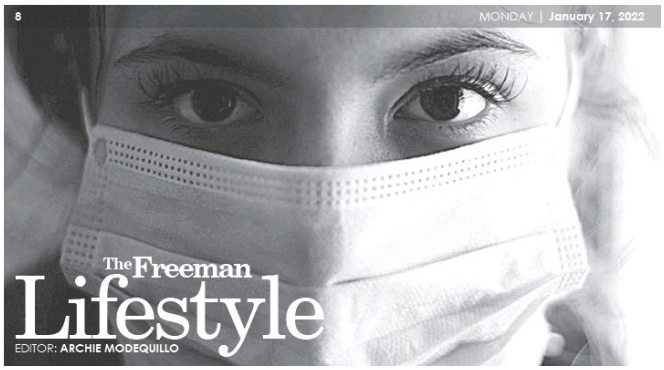
- Variation (Biology) / Virus

# How to Stay Safe from the Omicron Variant

The Freeman · 17 Jan 2022 · 8 · By Sandra Rivera

The world is into the third year of the Covid-19 menace. Health professionals everywhere continue to find ways to contain the disease. An definitive cure seems elusive – as the virus tend to be mutating all the time, with new characteristics and resistance capabilities to current treatments.




The most recent mutation of Covid-19 is the highly transmissible Omicron variant, which is now dominant in big population centers worldwide. With Covid-19 cases again in the upsurge, health authorities are encouraging everyone to remain vigilant, get vaccinated and receive their booster dose as soon as possible.

The Omicron variant makes up a huge percentage new Covid-19 infections in the U.S., according to recent data from the Center for Diseases Control. The Covid-19 cases there recently doubled. In the Philippines, in Metro Manila alone the infection rate has significantly peaked after the yuletide holidays, as local health experts had earlier predicted.

The renewed surge in Covid-19 infections is likely to continue over the next couple of weeks due to the omicron variant. Compounding the threat is the loosening of the public attitude in the observance of prescribed health-and-safety protocols. People seem to forget the fact that the coronavirus threat is still very much around.

Remaining vigilant and getting vaccinated are crucial to slowing the spread of Omicron and reducing hospitalizations and death. And while the initial vaccines provide some protection, people who have received a booster have far better protection from Omicron. Wearing a face mask, keeping socially distant, and frequent washing of hands remain key to slowing the spread of the disease.

Health officials are relentlessly advising unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated to help prevent illness. While it appears the Omicron variant may be less aggressive than other variants, it can still cause severe illness and death, especially among the unvaccinated population. Unvaccinated individuals are more likely to be hospitalized than those who are vaccinated, which can strain healthcare systems already dealing with Covid and preclude immediate care for patients with other ailments.

Health officials are also encouraging a booster shot for individuals who have already been vaccinated. A booster shot reduces the chance that vaccinated individuals will experience breakthrough infections, hospitalization and death.

Again, the basic health-and-safety protocol still stands:

- As much as possible, avoid crowds of people – or at least keep a comfortable distance from others when in a crowd.
- Wear a face mask.
- Wash your hands often.
- Get tested if you believe you have symptoms.
- Isolate at home if you have tested positive for Covid-19 or are experiencing symptoms.