



NEWS RELEASE

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Omicron Spread and Prevention Measures for Holiday Gatherings

Atlanta – The Georgia Department of Public Health is urging Georgians to carefully follow COVID-19 prevention measures during holiday celebrations and gatherings to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

COVID case numbers are increasing daily, and the Omicron variant is spreading faster than any previous variant.

Surveillance for COVID variants is done through genomic sequencing of PCR positive test results. In Georgia, the most recent genomic sequencing is from week ending Dec. 4, and at that time, the Delta variant was responsible for 98% of new COVID cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses genomic sequencing data to project current variant proportions and now estimates Omicron accounts for more than 73% of new COVID cases in the United States. Given the rapid transmissibility of the Omicron variant, the current proportion of Omicron in Georgia is likely similar to that of the national estimate, and presumably will account for all new COVID cases in the state in the coming weeks.

Regardless of the variant, mitigation and prevention measures for COVID-19 are the same. To help prevent transmission and to reduce your risk of exposure DPH recommends the following:

- Get a COVID vaccination and booster dose.
- For young children who aren't yet eligible for the COVID vaccine, reduce the risk of exposure by making sure the people around them are vaccinated.
- Wear well-fitting masks over your nose and mouth in public indoor settings.
- Physically distance, about six feet, around people outside of your own household.
- Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces and remember that outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- If you are sick or have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, don't host or attend a gathering.
- Follow CDC recommendations for holiday [travel](#).
- Get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have a close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Testing is critically important to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you have symptoms or had a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, you should be tested, regardless of your vaccination status. Consider getting a COVID test before gathering

indoors with others to determine if you're positive for COVID and to reduce the risk of spreading infection. If you test positive, you should [isolate](#) and inform [close contacts](#). A negative test result indicates either you are not infected or that you are at low risk of spreading disease to others, even though it does not necessarily rule out an infection.

To find a COVID vaccine or COVID testing location near you log on to dph.ga.gov.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.