



Lawrence · Douglas County
PUBLIC HEALTH
Advancing Health for All



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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 17, 2021

Douglas County has first confirmed case of Omicron variant

LAWRENCE, KS – Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health was notified today of the first confirmed case of the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Douglas County by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. It is the second confirmed case in Kansas.

Dr. Jennifer Schrimsher, deputy county health officer and infectious disease physician at LMH Health, said detection of the variant in the county does not come as a surprise as it has rapidly spread across the country since the first confirmed U.S. case of Omicron was identified on Dec. 1.

“This virus is highly infectious and transmittable,” she said. “Vaccines remain the best public health measure to protect people from COVID-19, slow transmission and reduce the likelihood of new variants emerging.”

The individual with the Omicron variant in Douglas County is a vaccinated adult who has received a booster dose. No additional details will be released to protect the privacy of the individual.

Health officials urge residents to use the following tools to protect against COVID-19 and the Omicron variant:

- **Get vaccinated and boosted.** The three authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalizations and death. Scientists expect the vaccines to prevent serious illness, hospitalizations, and death in people infected with the Omicron variant. COVID-19 vaccines are now authorized for people ages 5 and older. The COVID-19 booster shots are authorized for all individuals ages 16 and older. To find a vaccine near you, visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

- **Wear a mask.** Masks offer protection against all variants. It is recommended that people wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor settings, where COVID-19 transmission remains high, regardless of vaccination status.
- **Get tested.** If you are sick or have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, it is recommended that you get tested for COVID-19. COVID-19 tests are widely available. Go to [KnowBeforeYouGoKS.com](https://www.knowbeforeyougoKS.com) to find a free testing location near you. At-home tests are available for purchase at grocery stores and pharmacies. These can be used at home, work or anywhere and can provide rapid results. If a positive result is received through an at-home test, individuals should follow up with a health care provider about a confirmation test.
- **Social distance.** When in public settings, stay at least 6 feet from other people, especially if you are at higher risk of getting sick.

“Masks work and vaccines are safe and effective at preventing serious disease and death,” Schrimsher said. “These are two keystones of keeping our loved ones and the community at large safer.”

For local COVID information and resources, visit: douglascountyks.org/coronavirus.

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