



Omicron Update: Residents with Exposure to a Confirmed or Suspect Case Should Get Tested for COVID-19

December 3, 2021

Public Health Message Type: ☐ Alert ☒ Advisory ☐ Update ☐ Information

Intended Audience: ☒ All public health partners ☐ Healthcare providers ☐ Infection preventionists
☐ Local health departments ☐ Schools/child care centers ☐ ACOs
☐ Animal health professionals ☐ Other:

Summary

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is notifying healthcare providers and public health partners that **residents with a known or possible exposure to a confirmed or suspected Omicron case should get tested for COVID-19. Residents who attended the Anime NYC conference at the Javits Center in NYC during November 19-21 should get tested immediately, especially if experiencing symptoms, monitor for symptoms and seek medical help if needed. NJDOH is requesting that clinicians gather history of conference attendance as a possible exposure risk when patients present for care.**

Background

The Omicron (B.1.1.529) variant, classified as a variant of concern by the World Health Organization, has been reported in more than 20 countries. Despite the detection of this new variant, Delta remains the dominant variant, accounting for more than 99% of circulating strains.

It is not yet known how easily Omicron spreads compared to Delta, which is highly transmissible. The severity of disease Omicron causes, in comparison to Delta, is also not yet known though, based on preliminary information, no unusual symptoms have been reported after infection with Omicron. Because little is currently known about Omicron, it is imperative that the public health and medical communities remain vigilant to reduce exposure. NJDOH is working with local health departments, clinical laboratories, hospitals, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to rapidly identify individuals who may have been infected with the Omicron variant.

NJDOH is requesting that residents get tested with a viral test taken 5-7 days after exposure to a confirmed or suspected Omicron case. All NJ residents should continue to mask up where necessary, particularly if indoors and among the public and around those whose vaccination status is unknown; practice social distancing; and take other precautions such as frequent handwashing. Residents who are unvaccinated should get vaccinated against COVID-19. Those who are eligible, should get a booster dose.



A Minnesota resident who attended the Anime convention in New York City in late November has tested positive for the Omicron variant. The Anime convention took place at the Javits Center in Midtown Manhattan between November 19th and 21st and drew approximately 50,000 people. Attendees were required to wear masks and show proof of having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

NJDOH is urging New Jersey residents who attended the Anime NYC conference to get tested immediately, especially if experiencing symptoms, and to monitor for symptoms and seek medical help if needed. NJDOH is also requesting that clinicians gather history of conference attendance and history of international travel possible exposure risks when patients present for care and that Local health Departments continue to reinforce public health actions including isolation, quarantine, and contact tracing.

Action Items

- Residents with a known or possible exposure to a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case should:
 - Test for COVID-19 with a viral test taken 5-7 days after exposure (even if asymptomatic), monitor for symptoms, and seek medical care if needed.
 - Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
 - Isolate at home for 10 days if their test result is positive.
- Attendees of the Anime NYC conference in Midtown Manhattan during 11/19/21 and 11/21/21 should immediately get tested for COVID-19, monitor for symptoms for 14 days after their last day at the event, and seek medical help if needed.
- Clinicians should:
 - Refer patients, even if asymptomatic, with a known or possible exposure to a confirmed or suspect COVID-19 case for testing.
 - Encourage patients with COVID-19 symptoms to get tested.
 - Gather travel history or history of attendance to the Anime NYC conference as possible exposure risks when patients present for care.
 - Send specimens collected from patients with a possible exposure risk attributed to an Omicron case to the NJ Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL) for genomic sequencing.
 - Refer to [guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 variant strain surveillance and submission](#) and the [PHEL Technical Bulletin](#) for guidance.
 - Notify the [local health department](#) of travel history, household contacts, and close contacts of individuals who are confirmed to have the Omicron variant.
- All NJ residents should:
 - Get vaccinated against COVID-19 if not already vaccinated.
 - Get a booster dose as soon as they are eligible.
 - Wear a mask where necessary, particularly if indoors and among the public and around those whose vaccination status is unknown.



- Practice social distancing.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated areas.
- Wash hands frequently.

References and Resources

[CDC What You Need to Know About Variants](#)

[CDC Health Advisory on Omicron Variant](#)

[Statement from NYC Mayor on Omicron Variant](#)

[New Jersey COVID-19 Testing Site Finder](#)

[New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccination Site Finder](#)

[CDC Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots](#)

[New Jersey Local Health Department](#)

[NJDOH Weekly Variant Surveillance Reports](#)

[Guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 Variant Strain Surveillance and Submission](#)

[NJPHEL Specimen Submission Guidance](#)