

JULY 11, 2024 Covid report

The 3 leading sub variant strains currently causing cases in the U.S. are the KP.3 and KP.2 from the FLiRT variant family and the LB.1 from the Omicron variant. The share of cases by LB.1 is increasing per CDC data and so it may become the new dominant strain. As the previous variants, it is highly contagious. COVID-19 is not seasonal and continues to spread in the summer. COVID-19 cases are increasing in Jefferson county per waste water monitoring. Mutations such as the LB.1 have been seen before and are not particularly concerning or a sign the virus has changed drastically. LB.1 has *not* shown itself to be more dangerous than previous sub variants. *Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

Similar to previous sub variants, possible symptoms can include:

- **Sore throat**
- **Cough**
- **Fatigue**
- **Congestion**
- **Runny nose**
- **Fever or chills**
- **Headache**
- **Muscle aches**
- **New loss of sense of taste or smell**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

Even though symptoms are generally milder, some people can still experience severe enough symptoms to hospitalize them. If you think you might have it, have worsening symptoms, or test positive, call your doctors office. Antivirals like Paxlovid are effective against LB.1 and other recent strains.

CDC 2024 guidelines, updated in March 2024 say, if you test positive, stay home while sick and avoid contact with others. People can return to normal activities after they have been fever free *without* medication *and* symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.

Take the usual steps to protect yourself and others - mask in crowded places, practice good hand hygiene, cover coughs and sneezes, improve ventilation, and practice social distancing.

A new updated vaccine will be available in the Fall. It will be recommended that our age group get it.

References:

CDC website

Andrew Pekosz, PHD, Virologist at John Hopkins University

Dr. William Schaffer, professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University

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