

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Klickitat County Public Health

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### OMICRON COVID-19 VARIANT IDENTIFIED IN KLICKITAT COUNTY

*Klickitat County Health Department Urges Community Members to Schedule Their Vaccinations*

**Goldendale, WA, January, 11, 2022** - The Klickitat County Health Department (KCHD) was notified today that the COVID-19 Omicron variant has been identified in Klickitat County. The Omicron variant is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health as a concerning variant because of its potential increase in transmission. Based on current information found on the CDC's [variant information website](#):

- The Omicron variant is likely to spread easier than the original virus. However, it is unclear at this time if it is more easily spread than the Delta variant.
- Breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated are expected, but vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death.
- Anyone who contracts the Omicron variant can spread the virus to others even if they are vaccinated or not having any symptoms.
- The recent emergence of the Omicron variant further emphasizes the importance of vaccination and boosters.
- Scientists are still working on determining whether or not existing treatments for COVID-19 will be equally as effective for this variant.
- Vaccine boosters are recommended for anyone who has completed their Moderna or Pfizer vaccination series more than six months ago or received a J&J vaccine more than two months ago.
- For more information on the Omicron variant, please visit the [CDC website](#).

This variant information was gathered through the state public health surveillance program which tests for variant strains not for the purposes of clinical or public health management of individuals. As a result, no information was provided that would allow us to identify the individual that the sample belonged to at this time.

KCHD will continue to respond to COVID-19 with the current course of action. This includes encouraging community members to get vaccinated in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Community members can schedule their vaccinations [online through KCHD](#) at or by calling NorthShore Medical, Skyline Health, or Klickitat Valley Health for a vaccine appointment. Masking and good hand hygiene are still recommended for everyone.

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**About Klickitat County Public Health**

Klickitat County Public Health is always working for a safer and healthier community. As the region's public health leader and partner, we are committed to excellence through innovative programs, community partnerships and a fundamental dedication to promote and protect the health of all Klickitat County residents.

**For More Information:**

Klickitat County Public Health: [www.klickitatcounty.org/289/Public-Health](http://www.klickitatcounty.org/289/Public-Health)

Klickitat Valley Health: [www.kvhealth.net](http://www.kvhealth.net)

Skyline Health: [www.myskylinehealth.org](http://www.myskylinehealth.org)

Northshore Medical Group: [www.northshore-medical.com](http://www.northshore-medical.com)

COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard:

<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/covid-19-risk-assessment-dashboard>