
Covid XEC variant set to 'cause a wave' of new coronavirus cases as it's 'taking charge'

Scientists have warned that the XEC variant which has appeared across Europe is set to become the dominant variant this autumn.



The XEC variant has been seen across Europe. (Image: Getty)



A new Covid variant (</latest/coronavirus>) found in cases across Europe could soon become the dominant type according to scientists.

The XEC variant (</life-style/health/1949851/new-covid-variant-xec-spread-list-countries>), which was first identified in [Germany](#) (</latest/germany>), has been found in the UK, [US](/news/us) (</news/us>) and [Denmark](/latest/denmark) (</latest/denmark>) according to users on X.



[COVID](https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>)-19 vaccines have been updated to aid them in limiting the effects of new variants, although this does not extend to XEC which has developed from the [Omicron variant](/latest/omicron) (</latest/omicron>).

Despite this, Prof Francois Balloux, Director of the Genetics Institute at University College London, told [BBC](#) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/bbc>) News that although XEC has a "slight transmission advantage" over other recent [Covid](#) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>) variants, vaccines should still offer good protection.

This view is backed up by Eric Topol, scientist and physician who said: "At this juncture, the XEC variant appears to be the most likely one to get legs next."

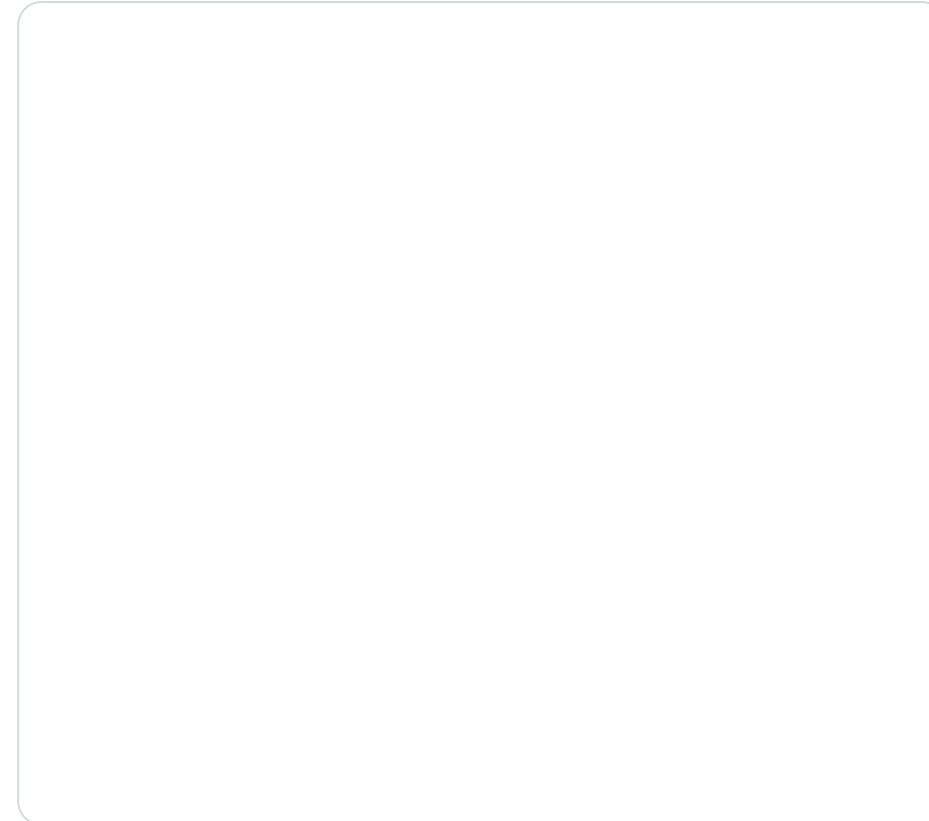
Mike Honey · Sep 15, 2024



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Recombinant variant XEC is continuing to spread, and looks a likely next challenger against the now-dominant DeFLuQE variants (KP.3.1.1.*).

Here are the leading countries reporting XEC. Strong growth in Denmark and Germany (16-17%), also the UK and Netherlands (11-13%).

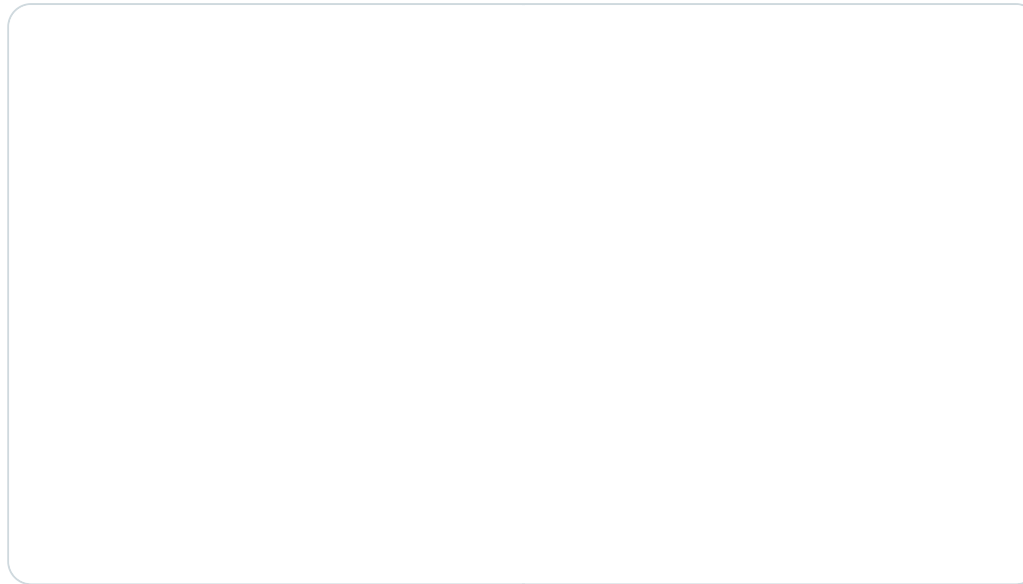


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XEC first appeared in Berlin in late June. It has since spread quite rapidly across Europe, North America and

Asia. Around 550 samples have now been reported, from 27 countries on 3 continents. Poland, Norway, Luxembourg, Ukraine, Portugal and China have now reported samples.



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When speaking to the LA Times, Mr Topol a Director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, in [California \(/latest/california\)](#) warned that the variant was just getting started.

He said: "That's going to take many weeks, a couple months, before it really takes hold and starts to cause a wave. XEC is definitely taking charge.

"That does appear to be the next variant. But it's months off from getting into high levels."

The symptoms of XEC COVID (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>)-19 will be familiar to those who have experienced other types. They include sore throat, high temperature, aches and tiredness.

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The UK Health Security Agency has urged people to get vaccinated this autumn. (Image: Getty)



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Mike Honey, a data representation specialist said: “XEC first appeared in Berlin in late June. It has since spread quite rapidly across [Europe \(/latest/europe\)](/latest/europe), North America and [Asia \(/latest/asia\)](/latest/asia).

“Around 550 samples have now been reported, from 27 countries on 3 continents.”

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) says it is normal for viruses to mutate and change.

A public health campaign is expected to commence in October to encourage the take-up of [COVID](https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>)-19 vaccination boosters.

Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, UKHSA Deputy Director, said: “It is normal and expected for viruses to genetically change over time. UKHSA continues to monitor all available information relating to emerging [Covid](https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>) variants in the UK and internationally and to publish our data regularly.

“Vaccination provides the best protection against serious illness from [Covid](https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus) (<https://www.express.co.uk/latest/coronavirus>)-19, and we urge those who are contacted by the NHS to come forward to receive their autumn vaccine.”

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