



XEC: What you should know about COVID-19's most recent variant



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BY BETH BRADFORD SEPT. 18, 2024 3:01 PM EST

As summer winds to an end, a new COVID-19 variant has emerged. The [BBC](#) says that Germany first noticed the XEC variant in June, but it's been spreading in the United Kingdom, the United States, and other countries. Data integration specialist Mike Honey posted on [X](#) that he expects XEC to challenge the current dominant COVID variant KP.3.1.1, which accounts for more than half of COVID cases in the U.S., according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). The KP.3.1.1. and XEC variants are both variants of Omicron.



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Symptoms of this new variant of COVID, which aren't much different from previous strains, include fever, body aches, fatigue, coughing, or a sore throat. You might also experience other symptoms such as a loss or distortion of smell, diarrhea, or [unusual COVID symptoms like brain fog](#). Medical analysts tell [Fox News Digital](#) that XEC is more contagious. Although there aren't many cases of the XEC variant in the United States right now, COVID researchers told the [Los Angeles Times](#) that a wave of cases of the XEC variant could come in a few months.

Will the new vaccines protect against the XEC variant?



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If it's been a while since you've had a vaccine booster, you might want to consider the new vaccines. The vaccines available in 2020 offered protection against the original COVID-19 virus, while the [bivalent vaccines made available in 2022](#) protected against both the original and emerging strains of Omicron. The Food & Drug Administration recently approved Pfizer and Moderna's updated vaccines that specifically target circulating variants, particularly the KP.2 strains. (Check out [things you shouldn't do after getting a COVID shot.](#))



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Infectious disease expert Dr. Elizabeth Hudson told the LA Times that these new vaccines should offer protection against the XEC variant because the variants are all part of Omicron. "We're not like in a new Greek letter — they're not that much different; it's not like something completely new," Hudson said.

The CDC said that COVID will continue to evolve, and as some variants emerge, others will disappear. Honey added that the MV.1 variant, which was first identified in India in June, is also spreading quickly and could challenge XEC as the dominant COVID variant.

RECOMMENDED



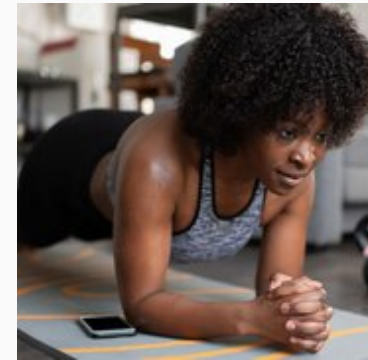
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