

AY.4.2: What do we know so far about the new Delta variant mutation?

A newly-discovered mutation of the delta variant is being investigated in the U.K. amid worries that it could make the virus even more transmissible and undermine Covid-19 vaccines further.

Still, there are many unknowns surrounding this descendent or subtype of the delta variant — formally known as AY.4.2 — which some are dubbing the new “delta plus” variant.

U.K. government health officials have said it’s too early to tell whether the mutation poses a greater risk to public health than the delta variant, which itself is significantly more infectious than the original Covid-19 strain (and its successor, the alpha variant).

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The U.K. is currently seeing a prolonged and worrying spike in Covid cases, reporting between 40,000-50,000 new infections per day in the last week, prompting experts to question why the U.K. is so vulnerable to Covid right now.

The delta subtype [is reported to be 10-15% more transmissible](#) than the standard delta variant, but it is too early to say for certain whether it has been causing a spike in cases in the U.K.

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