Infographic: When will Omicron peak?

Our models project that the United States is likely to document more Covid-19 cases in January than in any previous month of the pandemic, but a smaller fraction of those cases will require hospitalization. Whether hospitals experience more or less strain than they did in January 2021 will depend on case numbers and how severe they are. For example, if twice as many people become infected but these people are half as likely to be hospitalized, the demand for hospital beds would be the same.

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Our projections depict a rapid surge of cases nationally that peaks at record high numbers during the first one to three weeks of January. Just how many? Our middle-of-the-cone projection produces five million cases during the worst week but ranges from three million to more than eight million cases. And the estimates vary by location. New York City is projected to peak during the first week of January; other locations peak later.

As we move deeper into January, it will be important to monitor whether the steep rise of Omicron cases is followed by a rapid decline, as has been seen in South Africa. This would make the Omicron wave intense but short-lived.
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