

Omicron subvariant spreads 1.5x faster than Omicron — but vaccines are more effective at blocking it

The Omicron subvariant, known as BA.2, spreads about 1.5 times faster than the original Omicron strain, known as BA.1, according [to CNBC](#).

The Statens Serum Institut, which monitors infectious diseases in Denmark, said that BA.2 is more contagious, but it doesn't appear to increase hospitalizations or reduce how well the [vaccine](#) works.

BA.2 overtook BA.1 as the primary variant in Denmark within a few weeks, Troels Lillebaek, director of the institute, told CNBC. The subvariant has five unique mutations on a key part of the spike protein, which is what the [coronavirus](#) uses to invade human cells, he said. This often means a higher rate of spreading.

The Omicron subvariant has been detected in at least 29 states in the U.S. and 56 countries, according to the [latest update](#) from Outbreak.info. The U.S. has detected 188 infections, with the worldwide total nearing 25,000.

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A [preliminary evaluation](#) found that BA.2 doesn't appear to change how well the vaccine works compared to the original Omicron strain, the agency said. A booster dose was 70% effective at preventing symptomatic illness for BA.2, compared with 63% for the original Omicron strain.

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