OMICRON VARIANT: WHAT WE KNOW

- The symptoms of omicron and other seasonal respiratory viruses, including influenza (flu), are similar. Currently, all these viruses are circulating, and you should stay home when sick. Only a test can confirm whether you have COVID-19 or the flu, as opposed to the common cold.

- The omicron variant is more contagious (transmissible) than any prior variant.

- The incubation period (from exposure to symptoms) of omicron is 2-3 days. Because of this, if you were exposed YESTERDAY your test result TODAY may be inaccurate. Tests are more accurate once symptoms have begun.

- Symptoms of omicron may last 3-7 days. Some cases may be asymptomatic.

- Omicron may cause less severe illness. There is still a significant risk of hospitalization and death, especially for unvaccinated individuals (15 times greater risk of hospitalization).

- Omicron thrives in the nose and throat, so symptoms may include sore throat and nasal congestion or runny nose. This may also be why it’s more contagious: lots of virus particles in the airways are easily aerosolized and spread.

- High-quality masks (N95s and KN95s preferred) provide better protection than surgical masks. Cloth masks do not provide good protection against omicron (but it’s better to wear a cloth mask than no mask).

- Treatment options are limited. Most of the monoclonal antibodies that worked against other variants have not worked for omicron. There are other antivirals coming, but while they may help prevent severe infection, they don’t lessen transmission.

- If you are exposed (within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for over 15 minutes in a 24 hr period) and you are boosted, you are not required to quarantine, but must wear a mask and monitor for symptoms for 10 days. If you are unvaccinated, or vaccinated and eligible for a booster but have not received a booster, you must quarantine for 5 days. In either case, a NAAT/PCR test is recommended at day 5, or sooner if symptoms develop.

- If you are COVID-19 positive, isolate for 5 full days with strict mask wearing for the rest of the 10 days (day 0 is day of symptom onset, or day of positive test if no symptoms). If unable to wear a well-fitting mask, isolate for a full 10 days. To end isolation, symptoms, if present, must be improving.

- If you test positive on a home test, please report your result online at www.DutchessNY.gov/COVIDpositive and follow quarantine/isolation instructions.
**COVID-19 UPDATE**

Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD FACEP
Commissioner
Dept. of Behavioral & Community Health

**QUARANTINE & ISOLATION GUIDANCE**

For individuals who are NOT immunocompromised

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**QUARANTINE**

You were in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 and you must stay home.

**ISOLATE**

You tested positive for COVID-19 and must stay home AND away from others in your household, including using separate restrooms, if possible.

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**EXPOSED**

(Within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes in a 24hr period)

Day 0 = Exposure

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**TESTED POSITIVE**

Day 0 = Onset of Symptoms

OR

Day of Positive Test if Asymptomatic

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**FULLY VACCINATED AND BOOSTED**

- **QUARANTINE** required
- **ISOLATE** for 5 full days
- If symptoms are improving, wear a well-fitting mask for additional 5 days
- If symptoms persist or unable to wear a mask, **ISOLATE** for full 10 days

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**UNVACCINATED OR FULLY VACCINATED WITHOUT BOOSTER**

- **QUARANTINE** for 5 days
- **Mask & monitor for symptoms for additional 5 days**
- **Test at day 5, if possible**

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**ANY VACCINATION STATUS**

- **ISOLATE** for 5 full days
- If symptoms are improving, wear a well-fitting mask for additional 5 days
- If symptoms persist or unable to wear a mask, **ISOLATE** for full 10 days

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1/6/2022