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Omicron Wave Subsiding as Cases Continue to Decrease in USVI; Positivity Rate Falls to 9.45 Percent

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The Omicron wave of Covid-19 that affected the U.S. Virgin Islands earlier this month when active cases neared 4,000, has been subsiding in recent weeks, with cases dropping to 1,162 territory-wide as of Saturday as residents continue to recover from the variant. Omicron has proven to be much weaker than Covid-19 strains before it, including Delta.

According to data provided by the V.I. Dept of Health, St. Croix accounted for 661 of total active infections, followed by St. Thomas with 414, and St. John with 87. The positivity rate fell to 9.45 percent from a high of 24.30 percent at the peak of the Omicron surge.

Government offices are expected to return to regular in-person operation beginning today, and all public schools for the first time since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, will be open for

in-person learning starting on various dates throughout this week. See full schedule [here](#).

Additionally, the restriction the Bryan administration placed on travel that requires both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals to provide a negative Covid-19 test taken within 72 hours when traveling to the USVI, will expire at the end of January barring an extension from the Bryan administration.

Immunity From Prior Infection Gave Better Protection Than Vaccination During Delta Wave, CDC Says

A previous infection from Covid-19 provided better protection than vaccination against the virus during the Delta wave, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday, citing data showing those who received immunity through prior infection or vaccination fared way better compared to those who were unvaccinated.

The data came from 1.1 million people and included testing, actual cases and immunization. It was collected in New York and California, the federal health authority said, spanning the months of May through November of 2021, the period in which the Delta variant became the dominant strain of Covid-19 in the U.S., before the Omicron variant started circulating in December last year.

“Before the Delta variant, Covid-19 vaccination resulted in better protection against a subsequent infection than surviving a previous infection,” CDC epidemiologist Benjamin Silk said. “When looking at the summer and fall of 2021, when Delta became predominant in this country, however, surviving a previous infection now provided greater protection.” According to the CDC, data from hospitalizations came from more than 50,000 people just in California.

The timeframe of the research coincided with when vaccinated people were experiencing waning immunity from vaccine-induced inoculation before the wider rollout of booster shots, Dr. Silk said.

Many have contended that the U.S., like many parts of Europe, should count immunity gained through prior Covid-19 infection as providing enough protection to work, enter restaurants and participate in other activities that some jurisdictions only allow for the vaccinated.

The CDC, however, is still advocating vaccination, stating that it continues to be the surest way to gain immunity. And Dr. Silk also pointed to recent data that found people who got vaccinated several months after being infected with Covid-19 had more protection against symptomatic disease than a prior infection alone.

It is not yet clear how symptomatic infection from the Omicron variant defer from those who received natural immunity compared to those who took vaccines. However, reports suggest that the infections are milder in people with natural immunity.