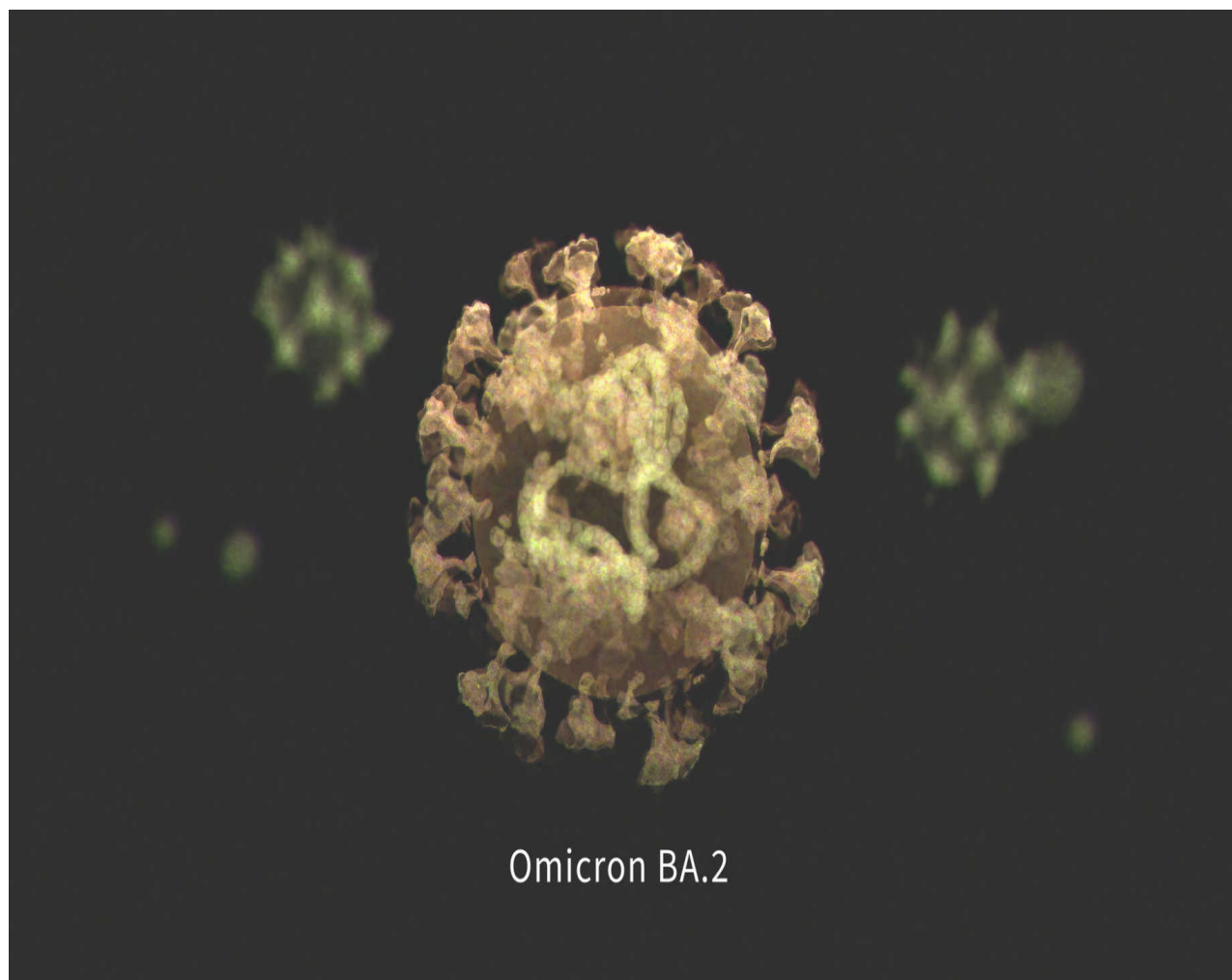


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. of Health Urging Public to Practice Safety as Covid Cases Surge to 244 and Hospitalizations Increase; BA.2 Subvariant Now Dominant in USVI

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The V.I. Dept. of Health is urging the public to practice safety protocols as Covid-19 infections have surged recently, and as hospitalizations continue to increase — a result D.O.H. says is driven by the Omicron subvariant named BA.2, which is now the dominant strain of the virus in both the U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Citing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, D.O.H. said the Omicron BA.2 variant spreads more quickly than earlier variants, including the Delta variant. "CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection, regardless of vaccination status or whether

or not they have symptoms, can spread the virus to others," D.O.H. said.

According to the health department's [latest Covid data](#), there were 244 active infections territory-wide as of Friday: 124 on St. Thomas, 115 on St. Croix, and 5 on St. John.

"Virgin Islands data shows we are presently experiencing higher than expected cases and that is the reason D.O.H. is emphasizing adherence to the safety practices," the health department said. "We currently have 244 active COVID-19 cases. Our positivity rate is 5.62% and we have three Covid-19 positive patients hospitalized at the Schneider Regional Medical Center."

The increase in infections comes as the USVI is preparing for its first carnival in two years, with thousands expected to be in attendance.

The health department urged individuals to take responsibility for their personal health as well as the well-being of their loved ones. "If you are high risk or you are close to someone who is considered high risk for Covid-19, do not attend crowded events," the department said.

High-risk individuals are at greater risk of severe Covid illness. They include the following:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic lung diseases
- Cystic fibrosis
- Dementia or other neurological conditions
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Disabilities
- Heart conditions
- HIV infection
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system)
- Mental health conditions
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
- Smoking, current or former
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
- Stroke or cerebrovascular disease
- Substance use disorders
- Tuberculosis

According to D.O.H., if you suspect you have Covid-19, call the COVID19 Hotline at (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519 for information on scheduling a test. The Hotline is open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Testing is also available on St. John every Wednesday from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the VI Port Authority (VIPA) Gravel Lot. If you have a medical emergency, call 911. For more information, visit

covid19usvi.com. For COVID19 updates, text COVID19USVI to 888777.

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