



REDUCING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 VARIANTS

Viruses change over time and can lead to new versions called Variants. When the changes result in a variant that can spread more easily, cause severe illness, or impact treatments or vaccine effectiveness, it is known as a Variant of Concern (VoC). There are four variants of concern in Canada. Currently, the most common variant of concern in Canada is the Delta variant.

1. Alpha - B.1.1.7

- Spreads very fast;
- May cause severe illness and death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

2. Beta - B.1.351

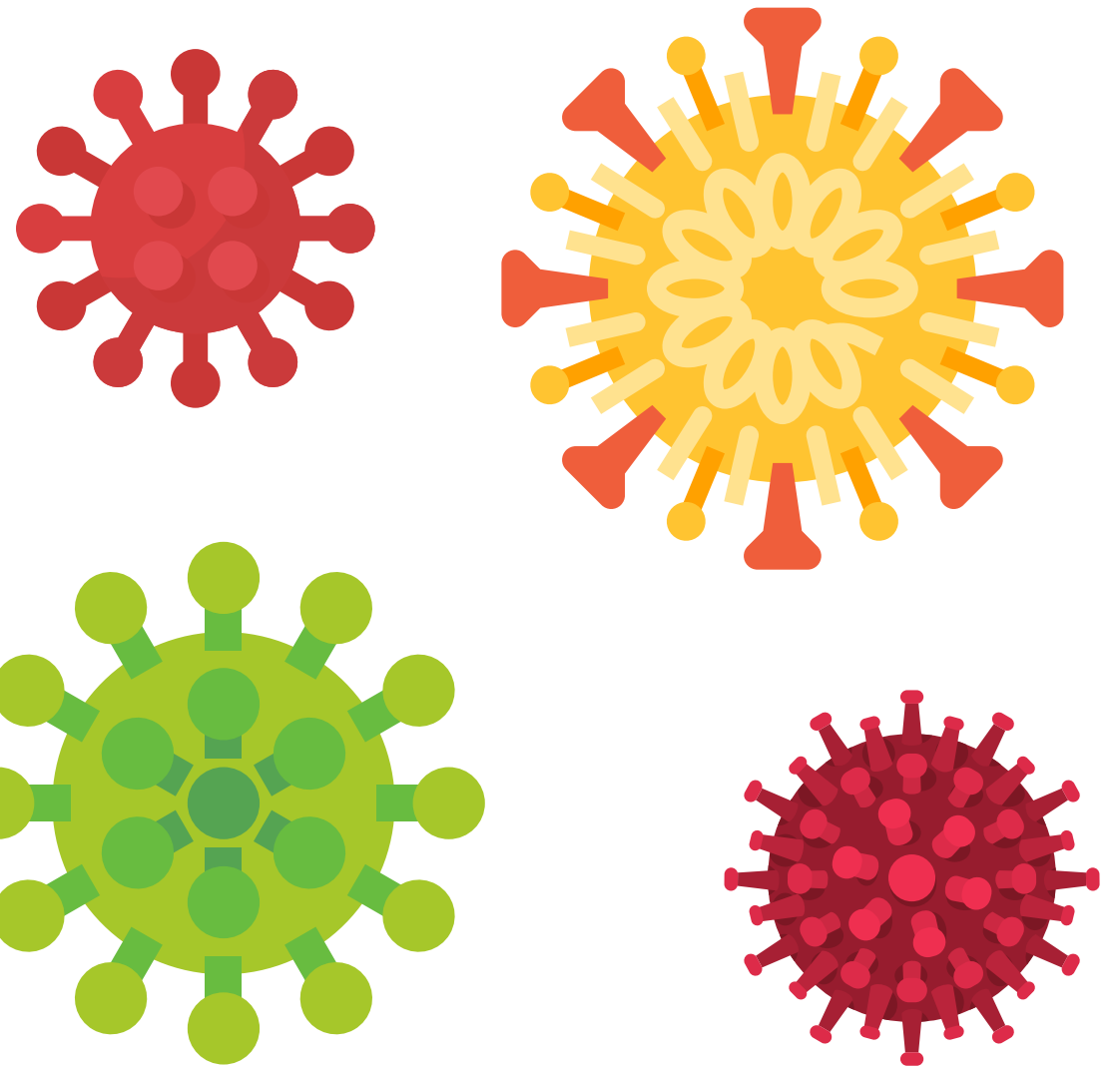
- Spreads very fast;
- Current data do not indicate more severe illness or death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

3. Gamma - P.1

- Spreads very fast;
- Current data do not indicate more severe illness or death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

4. Delta - B.1.617.2

- Highly infectious, spread faster than other variants;
- May cause more severe illness than the other variants;
- Unvaccinated people have the highest risk of serious illness;
- Fully vaccinated people can be infected with the Delta variant but are at a much lower risk of serious illness
 - Some fully vaccinated people (e.g., the elderly and people with existing health problems) are at greater risk of severe illness and hospitalization
- Preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others.



PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

1. **Get Vaccinated!** All approved COVID-19 vaccines provide a high degree of protection against getting severe illness and death. Ensure you are fully vaccinated as soon as you are eligible.
2. **Wear a non-medical mask in indoor public places.** Everyone (the unvaccinated, the partially vaccinated, and the fully vaccinated) are advised to wear a non-medical facemask when indoors in public buildings and at work.
3. **Stay six (6) feet away from people who do not live in your household.**
4. **Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.**
5. **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. **Cover coughs and sneezes.**
7. **Clean and disinfect.** Clean high-touch surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If someone is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19, disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Use Health Canada approved disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19;
8. **Monitor your health daily.** Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. Take your temperature if symptoms develop. If sick or you were in close contact with COVID-19, isolate and get tested.

The above information is adapted from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, and the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant.html>
2. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/variants>
3. <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/vaccine-efficacy-effectiveness-and-protection>