

# "Kraken" COVID Variant XBB.1.5.



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## What is the "Kraken" COVID Variant?

XBB1.5, or the "Kraken" variant is a subvariant of the Omicron variant that is quickly gaining traction around the world due to its very high infectiousness. The WHO has called Kraken the most infectious subvariant to date which is causing some concern.

## What do we know about this new variant?

Kraken is extremely infectious and can cause infection in those who have been fully immunized and boosted or those who have been recently infected, indicating significant immune evasion capabilities. It is now accounting for upwards of 40% of new cases in the United States and has been identified throughout Canada. Fortunately, this variant does not appear to be more severe than other Omicron variants

## What are the symptoms of the "Kraken" COVID variant?




Symptoms of infection from the Kraken variant are similar to those of other COVID-19 variants, including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, etc. As with other COVID-19 variants, it can cause severe infection in some people.

## How protective are current vaccines against this variant?

Despite Kraken's significant immune evasion capabilities, getting boosted will certainly confer some protection, particularly against severe infection. The bivalent booster is currently being offered, which protects against both the original and Omicron variants of COVID-19.

In addition to vaccination, using different layers of protection is the best way of slowing down the spread of this variant and protecting yourself and your loved ones. This includes getting vaccinated, masking in high-risk situations, practicing respiratory etiquette, and staying home when sick.

## What can I do to stay safe and healthy?

-  Get vaccinated! COVID-19 vaccines are available in pharmacies, public health clinics, and some family physician offices across Canada. .
-  Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
-  Stay at home if you are feeling unwell! Avoid close contact with people who are also unwell.

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[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/nCoV/voc/2023/01/risk-assessment-omicron-sub-lineage-xbb1-xbb15.pdf?rev=9ca6f6583bb841bb9c46f762be573778&sc\\_lang=en](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/nCoV/voc/2023/01/risk-assessment-omicron-sub-lineage-xbb1-xbb15.pdf?rev=9ca6f6583bb841bb9c46f762be573778&sc_lang=en)

<https://www.nebraskamed.com/COVID/what-covid-19-variants-are-going-around>