

COVID Variant Updates

Dear Family and Friends,

I know you are thinking, is it over yet? With the mandates in the community being lifted and the restaurants and sports events going back to full capacity, you would think that we can get back to pre COVID lifestyle. Unfortunately, we cannot. The reason is the constant mutation of the virus that affects its transmission and virulence.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur. Sometimes new variants emerge and disappear. Other times, new variants persist. Multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic.

Viruses constantly change and become more diverse. Scientists monitor these changes, including changes to the spikes on the surface of the virus. By carefully studying viruses, scientists can learn how changes to the virus might affect how it spreads and how sick people will get from it.

If you think about a virus like a tree growing and branching out; each branch on the tree is slightly different than the others. By comparing the branches, scientists can label them according to the differences. These small differences, or variants, have been studied and identified since the beginning of the pandemic.

Some variations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to treatments or vaccines. Those variants must be monitored more carefully.

Variants in the United States

We are monitoring multiple variants; currently there are four notable variants in the United States:

B.1.1.7 (Alpha): This variant was first detected in the United States in December 2020. It was initially detected in the United Kingdom.

B.1.351 (Beta): This variant was first detected in the United States at the end of January 2021. It was initially detected in South Africa in December 2020.

P.1 (Gamma): This variant was first detected in the United States in January 2021. P.1 was initially identified in travelers from Brazil, who were tested during routine screening at an airport in Japan, in early January.

B.1.617.2 (Delta): This variant was first detected in the United States in March 2021. It was initially identified in India in December 2020.

These variants seem to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. An increase in the number of cases will put more strain on healthcare resources, lead to more hospitalizations, and potentially more deaths.

So far, studies suggest that the current authorized vaccines work on the circulating variants. Scientists will continue to study these and other variants.

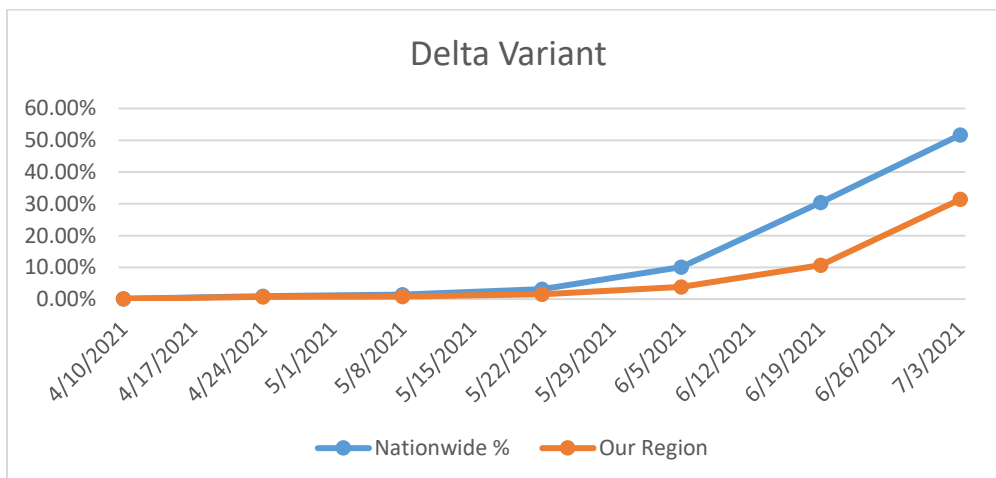
What can you do to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 and its variants?

- Get a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) when it is available to you. If a two-step vaccine, make sure that you get both doses!
- Wear [a mask that covers your nose and mouth](#) to help protect yourself and others.
- [Stay 6 feet apart from others](#) who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- [Wash your hands often](#) with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

The Delta variant is the latest variant and so you can see how fast this variant can spread, please look at the percentage of cases in the region of Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Week ending	Nationwide %	Our Region
7/3/2021	51.7%	31.4%
6/19/2021	30.4%	10.7%
6/5/2021	10.1%	3.8%
5/22/2021	3.1%	1.5%
5/8/2021	1.4%	0.8%
4/24/2021	0.9%	0.7%
4/10/2021	0.1%	0.1%

To show you how quickly it spreads, see below graph



As of June 19, the top five states in the United States with the Delta variant in order according to their prevalence are:

Missouri

Nevada

Colorado

California

New Jersey

It is now summertime and people are vacationing in other states, to prevent transmitting the virus to us, we need to continue to follow the core principles of infection control and get vaccinated!

The majority of cases seen are those who are unvaccinated, but there are some of vaccinated individuals. The difference is that the vaccinated individuals have milder symptoms and hospitalization is not needed. The unvaccinated individuals are hospitalized and dying.

We want you to be fully informed because there is a false sense of security being portrayed as the community outside of our facility and nursing homes in general is opening up. Please don't take chances when you are out in the community, which could unknowingly bring COVID back into our facility to your loved ones, our other residents and staff.