

# COVID-19

see [COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

## COVID-19 Variants Overview



This table summarizes the major SARS-CoV-2 variants, their characteristics, and clinical implications.

### Major Variants

Variant	First Identified	Key Features	Clinical Impact	WHO Label
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	UK, Sept 2020	Highly transmissible	More severe disease	Variant of Concern
Beta (B.1.351)	South Africa, May 2020	Immune escape	Possible vaccine resistance	Variant of Concern
Gamma (P.1)	Brazil, Nov 2020	Reinfection risk	Moderate severity	Variant of Concern
Delta (B.1.617.2)	India, Oct 2020	Very high spread	Higher hospital/death rates	Variant of Concern
Omicron (B.1.1.529)	Southern Africa, Nov 2021	Extremely contagious, many mutations	Milder disease	Variant of Concern

Subvariant	Key Notes
BA.1 / BA.2	Initial waves; BA.2 more transmissible
BA.4 / BA.5	More immune-evasive; widespread in mid-2022
XBB / XBB.1.5 (“Kraken”)	Recombinant; caused winter 2022–23 surge
EG.5 (“Eris”)	Circulated mid-late 2023; moderate immune escape
JN.1	Dominant in early 2024

### General Trends



- Early variants: more severe in unvaccinated
- Omicron and beyond: milder but more transmissible
- Current focus: protection of vulnerable and managing comorbidities

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