



[The World Health Organization Warns That the Coronavirus Omicron Variant Poses a Serious Global Risk](#)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a dire warning regarding the serious global risk posed by the coronavirus omicron variant, as some countries have reimposed travel restrictions and additional mitigation measures. Even as much is still unknown about the variant, health officials and experts have cautioned over its possibility to resist vaccines and inflict symptoms on people, including those who were previously infected with COVID-19. While the symptoms seem to be mild thus far, showing promising limitations to the potential of an increasing fatality rate, there is worry over the variant's high number of mutations. As such, internationally, many countries have taken swift and strong action in an attempt to curb the spread, closing their borders and instituting travel restrictions on places where the variant has been detected until more is learned about it. The WHO has expressed concern for nations which have low COVID-19 vaccination rates, but has also stressed that time is needed in order for medical experts to fully understand the scope of the omicron variant.

The variant was first spotted in South Africa; however, health officials now believe that it has most likely spread widely across the globe, with cases being reported in Europe and other places. Earlier this week, the first confirmed case of the omicron variant in the United States was identified in the state of California as well. Little is known about the variant with many hypotheses being put forth from medical professionals, but one thing that has been found by the WHO is that it is highly contagious – eliciting fear over the ability for COVID-19 vaccines to resist infection. The global health organization has warned countries to expect surges depending on the existing healthcare capabilities available in each nation. Many have taken little chances in allowing for the variant to spread. The United States has suspended travel to places in which infections have been reported, and Japan has shut down its borders once again. It seems as though countries with the highest vaccination rates will continue to utilize the vaccine and boosters as a major strategy in combating the virus. For now, the WHO and experts have made it clear that the best way to counter any further spread is to encourage vaccination, and therefore they are urging those with the most access to these vaccines to assist the global community in this regard.

South Africa and other nations that are currently being added to a growing list of travel restrictions have expressed frustration with the border shutdowns. The United Nations secretary general has voiced concern with the bans as well, arguing that the international community should not punish certain nations for the variant. He highlighted that instead, there should be a focus on the sharing of critical medical science information in order to combat the threat of the variant. Rights advocates are worried about the greater risk of the omicron variant spreading in nations with low collective vaccination rates, and stressed the need for the sharing of scientific data, especially from those places where a higher number of cases has been detected and more research has subsequently been done into the variant. Otherwise, the fear is that any potential negative economic impact of a travel restriction could mean that certain nations will be less likely to share important scientific information with the global community.

With a great deal still to learn about the omicron variant, U.S. President Biden has commented that it is a cause for concern but not panic. Medical experts have stated that even with little known, there is optimism about the vaccine's effectiveness, particularly with booster shots. As some nations begin to close their borders, human rights activists and others worry about the potential long-term impacts of these decisions. One thing that is clear is that the international community must collaborate and share information now more than ever to try and minimize any harmful ramifications of the omicron variant.