

COVID-19 variant XBB.1.5:

What you need to know for 2024

What is COVID-19 variant XBB.1.5?

XBB.1.5 is a variant of the virus that causes COVID-19. More specifically, XBB.1.5 is a **subvariant** of Omicron, meaning XBB.1.5 is a **descendant** of the Omicron variant.

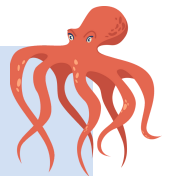
XBB.1.5 was the most common variant in the United States and some other parts of the world at the beginning of 2023. In fact, XBB.1.5 accounted for **55%** of reported COVID-19 cases globally during the last week of March 2023, and the variant is still contributing to COVID-19 cases in Canada.



The good news is, vaccines that specifically protect against variant XBB.1.5 are available in Canada.

Did you know?

Some scientists have nicknamed XBB.1.5 “**Kraken**”. The Kraken is a mythical sea creature from Scandinavian folklore that resembles a giant squid or octopus.



Really, another COVID-19 vaccine? Why should I get vaccinated against XBB.1.5?

XBB.1.5 is **still causing** people in Canada to become sick with COVID-19, and many of the other COVID-19 variants currently active in Canada are **closely related** to XBB.1.5. For example, JN.1 is another subvariant of Omicron, meaning it is related to XBB.1.5, and it is currently causing the majority of COVID-19 cases in Canada. So, by getting vaccinated against XBB.1.5, you not only protect yourself against this variant, but you also offer yourself better protection against many of the other variants currently active in Canada, including JN.1. **A win-win situation.**

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Remember!

COVID-19 vaccines may not prevent you from catching COVID-19, but they are **very effective** at protecting you against hospitalization and severe disease caused by COVID-19. They also make it less likely that you will experience long-term COVID-19 symptoms.

Getting immunized against COVID-19 variant XBB.1.5 is safe and the best way to protect against COVID-19 infection.

Talk to your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or local public health office about getting immunized against XBB.1.5. If you have children, you can also ask about getting them immunized.



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