

Viruses change over time and can lead to new versions called Variants. When the changes result in a variant that can spread more easily, cause severe illness, or impact treatments or vaccine effectiveness, it is known as a Variant of Concern (VoC). There are four variants of concern in Canada. Currently, the most common variant of concern in Canada is the Delta variant.

1. Alpha - B.1.1.7

- Spreads very fast;
- May cause severe illness and death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

2. Beta - B.1.351

- Spreads very fast;
- Current data do not indicate more severe illness or death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

3. Gamma - P.1

- Spreads very fast;
- Current data do not indicate more severe illness or death;
- Currently, authorized vaccines are effective against this variant;
- Breakthrough infections may occur in fully vaccinated individuals.

4. Delta - B.1.617.2

- Highly infectious, spread faster than other variants;
- May cause more severe illness than the other variants;
- Unvaccinated people have the highest risk of serious illness;
- Fully vaccinated people can be infected with the Delta variant but are at a much lower risk of serious illness
 - Some fully vaccinated people (e.g., the elderly and people with existing health problems) are at greater risk of severe illness and hospitalization
- Preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others.



PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

- 1. Get Vaccinated! All approved COVID-19 vaccines provide a high degree of protection against getting severe illness and death. Ensure you are fully vaccinated as soon as you are eligible.
- 2. Wear a non-medical mask in indoor public places. Everyone (the unvaccinated, the partially vaccinated, and the fully vaccinated) are advised to wear a non-medical facemask when indoors in public buildings and at work.
- 3. Stay six (6) feet away from people who do not live in your household.
- 4. Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces.
- 5. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- 6. Cover coughs and sneezes.
- 7. Clean and disinfect. Clean high-touch surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If someone is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19, disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Use Health Canada approved disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19;
- 8. Monitor your health daily. Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. Take your temperature if symptoms develop. If sick or you were in close contact with COVID-19, isolate and get tested.



- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant.html
- 3. <u>https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/vaccine-efficacy-effectiveness-and-protection</u>

