

Testing for COVID-19 Variants:

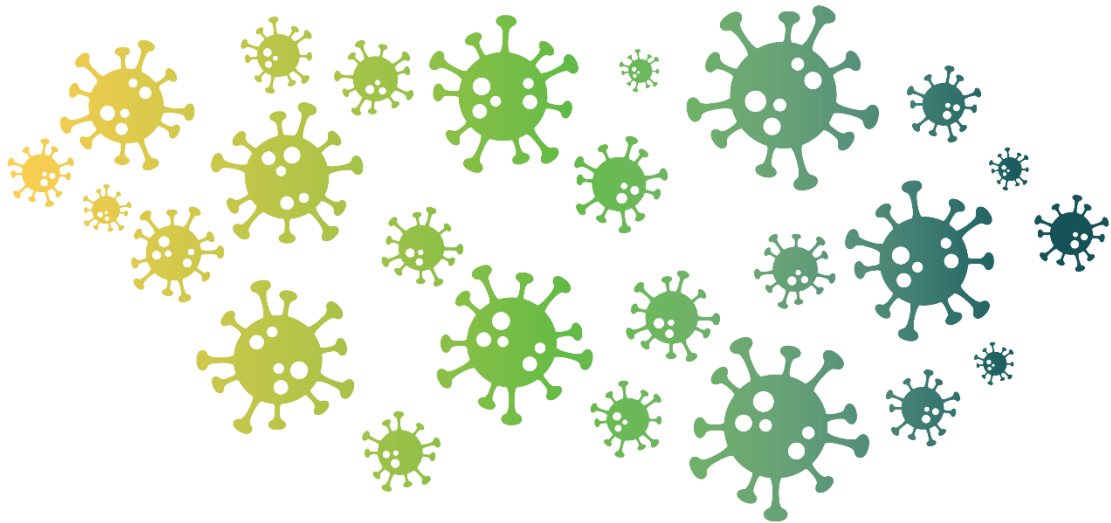
Here's What to Know

The COVID-19 virus has changed over time — this is called

MUTATING

COVID-19 viruses that change a lot from the original virus are known as

VARIANTS





The more the virus spreads, the more it has a chance to mutate and create new variants.

The best way to slow the spread of variants is to get vaccinated.



When you take a COVID-19 test, it will only tell you if you have COVID-19 or not. It does not tell you which variant you have.



A percentage of people's tests — not all tests — are sent to the state's public health lab.

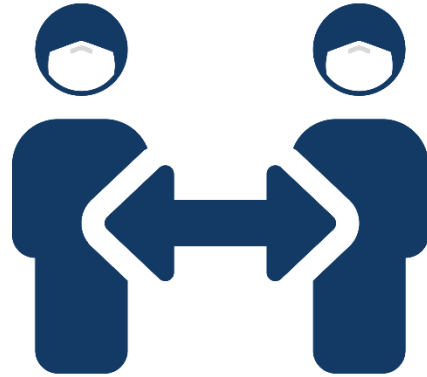
Through a process called sequencing, scientists can determine which variant caused the infection and monitor how the virus is changing.



Testing for variants takes a long time and a lot of work. It takes the lab about 42 hours to run 100 tests.

We run enough tests to give us a good idea of which variants are spreading.

We are not able to release the results of these variant tests to doctors or patients. No matter which variant you have, you'll take the same steps, like staying home and away from others.



Regardless of which COVID-19 variant is spreading, everyone should still protect themselves and others.



Get vaccinated.



Wear a mask when recommended.



Stay home if you feel sick.

Example Social Media to use:

1. Over time, the COVID-19 virus changes, or mutates. This is called a variant. The more the virus spreads, the more it has a chance to mutate and create new variants. The best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 variants is to get vaccinated.

2. Wondering what's up with COVID-19 variants? If you get tested for COVID-19, the test results won't tell you which variant you have. But public health officials know which variants are circulating in Minnesota by using a process called sequencing. Sequencing takes a long time and a lot of resources, so researchers run just enough tests to be confident about what variants are in Minnesota.

3. Here's what you should know about variants. Regardless of what variant is spreading in Minnesota, the steps to staying safe are all the same. Things like wearing a mask when recommended, staying home when you're sick, and getting vaccinated will help you protect yourself and community from COVID-19.

4. Did you know? The biggest opportunity for COVID-19 to develop more variants is community spread. The more the virus spreads, the more opportunities it has of creating new variants. Getting vaccinated is the best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 variants and keep everyone you love healthy.

5. If you've been wondering how public health officials know which COVID-19 variants are circulating in Minnesota, it's through a process called sequencing! Sequencing takes a long time and a lot of resources, so researchers run just enough tests to be confident about what variants are in Minnesota. A COVID-19 test can't tell you what variant you may have, but all the steps you should take if you have a positive COVID-19 test are always the same, regardless of the variant. Prevent spread of COVID-19 by wearing mask when recommended, getting vaccinated, staying home if you are sick, getting tested when needed, and washing hand often.