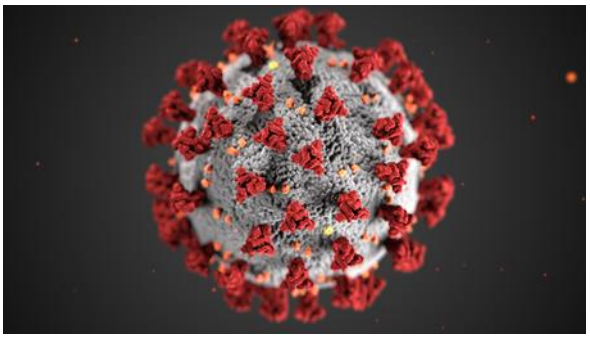
SARS-CoV-2 JN.1 Variant



SARS-CoV-2 and the JN.1 variant

Overview:
SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is constantly evolving and mutating. The JN.1 variant has recently been detected and is genetically similar to the BA.2.86 variant first identified in August 2023. To date, there is one identified difference between JN.1 and BA.2.86 in the spike protein. CDC projects that JN.1 will continue to increase as a proportion of SARS-CoV-2 genomic sequences. It is currently the fastest-growing variant in the United States. As new variants emerge, questions have arisen about whether additional control measures are needed or if there are changes to the recommended public health practices to prevent infection with SARS-CoV-2. This document provides a brief review of the currently available evidence.

CDC Update from December 8, 2023:

- Always refer to the most recent CDC COVID-19 information by going to https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.
- Healthcare professionals should refer to the most recent CDC guidance related to transmission-based precautions, clinical care and more at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html.
- **Transmission**. JN.1's continued growth suggests it may be better at evading immune systems, or it may simply be more transmissible, according to the CDC. After its first documented appearance in the U.S. in September, JN.1 went from accounting for 3.5% of COVID cases in mid-November to a little more than 21% about a month later in December, according to CDC estimates.
- CDC projects that JN.1 will continue to increase as a proportion of SARS-CoV-2 genomic sequences. It is currently the fastest-growing variant in the United States.
- **Most important, at this time, testing, treatment and vaccination strategies appear to be effective, as are current cleaning and disinfection approaches**.
- **Severity of Disease**. It is too soon to know whether this variant might cause more severe illness compared with previous variants. The CDC is closely monitoring hospitalization rates to identify any potential signals that the JN.1 variant is causing more severe illness. At this time, locations where this variant have been detected have not experienced increases in transmission indicators (e.g.,

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cases, emergency department visits) or hospitalizations out of proportion to those seen in neighboring locations.

- **Immune Impacts:** The continued growth of JN.1 suggests that it is either more transmissible or better at evading our immune systems. At this time, there is no evidence that JN.1 presents an increased risk to public health relative to other currently circulating variants.
- Updated COVID-19 vaccines are expected to increase protection against JN.1, as they do for other variants.
- Prevention practices should continue and include:
  - Vaccination using currently approved vaccines for people age 6 mos. and older. Refer to your organization's vaccination policies.
  - Stay home if you are sick. In healthcare facilities, follow facility-specific infection prevention and control recommendations.
  - Seek treatment if you have COVID-19 and are at high risk of getting very sick .
  - If you choose to wear a mask, wear a high-quality one that fits well over your nose and mouth.
  - Improve ventilation. Follow facility-specific policies and procedures regarding masking.
  - Washing hands frequently and per your facility's hand hygiene policy.
  - Testing if you think you may have been exposed.
  - Respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
  - Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces at least daily. In healthcare, more frequent disinfection may be necessary, especially in the presence of outbreaks.
  - Monitor your health daily.

Conclusion:
To date the JN.1 variant does not appear to present additional challenges versus the other SARS-CoV-2 variants. Vaccination (even if previously ill with COVID) and following the other currently recommended public health practices is the best way to protect yourself and your family from SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 disease. Diversey will continue to provide updates to our employees and our customers as new information becomes available.

References:
https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/whats-new/SARS-CoV-2-variant-JN.1.html

https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/whats-new/index.html

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions

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