# Covid 19 Update

# July 2022

### Covid is Still with Us – BA.5 Variant More Contagious and Faster to Pass On

The number of reported Covid cases climbed almost 20% to 24,465 in Ohio in the week ending July 17. During the same week, cases in Kentucky rose by 23.1% to 11,950. The national rate of Covid cases rose by 29%. Experts attribute much of the increase to the spread of the new Omicron variant BA.5 which is thought to be the most contagious variant so far. The good news is that BA.5 is mild compared to other variants and is not causing a proportionate rise in deaths and hospitalizations. Hospitalizations are mostly in the 60-plus age groups and are not so severe as in past waves of the virus. People not being up to date with their booster shots can contribute to the spread of BA.5. Those 50 and older need two booster shots to be up to date. Those aged 5 and older should have one booster shot. Most Ohioans who have been vaccinated are not up to date on their booster shots. With the emergence of new and more contagious variants and many of us under protected, we can expect a continuation of this summer surge and a fall/winter surge as people go back indoors.

We still recommend wearing masks in crowded places, social distancing, hand washing and, above all, keeping up to date on vaccinations. For more information, use these sources Center for Closing the Health Gap (<https://closingthehealthgap.org/>), Hamilton County Health Department (<https://www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org/covid19/>), City of Cincinnati Health Department (<https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/covid-19/>).