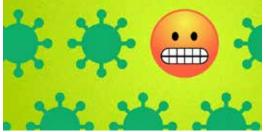
Omicron variant producing a tidal wave of cases in the U.S.

Michael Martin, <u>Yahoo News</u>, 12-24-21 -- note: Omicron is being updated almost daily in national news sources.

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 has surged worldwide in record time—it was only three weeks ago that the first case was identified in South Africa. Last week, it accounted for 73% of new COVID infections in the United States, according to the latest CDC data. It's highly contagious — scientists estimate it's twice as transmissible as the Delta variant — which calls for an abundance of caution.



Symptoms of an Omicron infection are: 1) a scratchy or sore throat (2) nasal congestion (3) a dry cough (4) muscle pain, especially low back pain. Experts tentatively say that Omicron seems to be producing milder symptoms than previous variants. "It is clear that if you're vaccinated, particularly if you've had a booster, Omicron tends to produce milder infections," Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "What we haven't seen yet is a

substantial body of information about what Omicron will do in unvaccinated people," he added. But experts warn that more data needs to be gathered before it can be conclusively said that Omicron causes different symptoms.

Early data indicates that Omicron's incubation period—the time it takes for an infected person to develop symptoms after exposure to the virus—may be significantly shorter than with previous variants: Previously, it was about a week, while Omicron may develop in three days or less.

So how do you tell if your cough or sore throat is a cold or COVID? You really can't, experts say. Their advice: If you're having any symptoms that are out of the ordinary, get tested for COVID ASAP—even if you've been fully vaccinated or boosted—and self-isolate until you know the results.

"Even if you think it's just allergies, it would be best for you to go ahead and get a COVID test and make sure you don't have it before you go to work or school or church, because those symptoms can be very mild," said S. Wesley Long, medical director of diagnostic microbiology at Houston Methodist hospital, this week.

Our Take: Protect yourself from ALL variants

How can I protect myself from the new Omicron variant?

The same way you guard against COVID-19 caused by any other variant: Get vaccinated if you haven't yet; get a booster if you're eligible.

What we need to do is add more layers of protection. A booster shot is one of those layers. The added dose triggers a big jump in virus-fighting antibodies.

In addition to masking, avoiding crowds and improving ventilation, testing is another protective step. That's recommended for anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or was potentially exposed to the virus. Check with Richland Public Health's Facebook page (and "like" us) or that of the local librairies or 2-1-1 for availability of FREE testing kits.

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

COVID-19 vaccinations and booster shots are now widely available for free. Our registration number is 419-774-4700.

See richlandhealth.org/covid-vaccine-qa for all area providers.

As of December 30, Richland County had vaccinated 53,697 with at least one dose of the vaccines and Ohio had vaccinated 6.985 million individuals.

COVID-19 Cases from Nov. 30 to Dec. 30, 2021

Location	Cases	Deaths	Hospitalized
Richland County	3,071	32	86
Ohio	284,045	978	7,572

National Health Observances for January: Cervical Health Awareness Month; Birth Defects Prevention Month; Glaucoma Awareness Month; Blood Donor Month; Thyroid Awareness Month; ; Jan. 23-29: Healthy Weight Week; Jan. 12: National Pharmacist Day; Jan. 17: King Day of Service (Community Service Day).

Quarantine Questions? See here: richlandhealth.org/quarantining/

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Health services for people of all ages who are residents of Richland County. Services are provided through our onsite clinic, in the community and through our home visits.

Public Health Clinic November	· YTD
Immunizations (visits)97	'1,019
International Travel (visits/consults) I	
Nurse Appointments I	1
COVID/Other Vaccinations365	8,878
Total Visits464	9,909
For Clinic Appointments for child, adult, trav	el, and
shingles vaccine as well as flu shots: call 419-7	74-4700.
All visits to the Clinic are by appointment.	

Public Health Nursing November CMH (case contacts)......480 4,617 Community Health Screenings...... Influenza Vaccines (Flu Shots).... Lead Case Management..... Newborn/Prenatal Home Visits... Cribettes distributed..... School Nurses (student care YTD)......269 1,629

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT

Infectious Diseases (not flu/sti/covid)	24	218
Influenza (A & B)		
Hospitalizations due to Influenza	I	1
COVID-19 (coronavirus)	. 1,643	12,041
Hospitilizations Due to COVID-19	66	636
Sexually Transmitted Infection		
STI Positive Results	42	649

Chlamydia	33	495
Gonorrhea		
Syphilis	0	4
-7 F		

WIC Services - Nov.

New Participants Recertifications Other Contacts

Total Ashland & Richland Counties:

164 102 607

871

Website: richlandhealth.org Facebook: Richland Public Health Twitter: @RichlandHealth1 Instagram: RichlandHealth YouTube: Richland Health

Is it a cold, the flu, or COVID-19?

The common cold, flu, and COVID-19 are all respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. Because these three types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it's hard tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone.

COVID-19 is obviously a very serious infection and flu is worse than the common cold. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations. COVID-19 and flu can have very serious associated complications, especially for people 65 and over.

People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems and symptoms can be lessened with over-the-counter medications.

The symptoms of COVID-19 and flu can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness). COVID-19 often includes loss of taste and smell, although the Omicron variant tends not to have this. Symptoms of the flu typically appear one to four days after infection while COVID-19 symptoms may take as long as 10 days after infection. Not sure which one you have? Talk to your doctor and get tested if necesssary.

Although a flu shot won't stop COVID-19, getting a flu shot may keep you out of the hospital and lower the burden on health care facilities handling the pandemic.

Call 419-774-4700 to schedule your flu shot, COVID-19 vaccine shots, or COVID-19 booster shot at a time convenient for you.

Hypothermia Awareness

When cold weather strikes, Richland Public Health reminds Richland County residents to be aware of hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature).

Hypothermia occurs when more heat escapes from your body than your body

can produce. Signs and symptoms of hypothermia may include gradual loss of mental and physical abilities. Severe hypothermia can lead to death.

For most people, hypothermia isn't a serious risk. Still, each year nearly 700 people in the United States die of hypothermia. Common causes are prolonged exposure to cold air or water temperatures.

When you're outdoors enjoying such activities as camping, hunting, ice fishing, and skiing, be aware of weather conditions

and whether you or others with you are wet and cold. If you get cold and wet, move indoors and get warm and dry early — before you develop hypothermia.

Hypothermia usually occurs gradually. Often, people aren't aware that they need help, much less medical attention. Common signs to look for are **shivering**, which is your body's attempt to generate heat through muscle activity, and the "-umbles": Stumbles, Mumbles, Fumbles, Grumbles. These behaviors may be a result of changes in consciousness and motor coordination caused by hypothermia. Other hypothermia symptoms may include: slurred speech; abnormally slow rate of breathing; cold, pale skin; fatigue, lethargy or apathy. Persons exhibiting these symptoms need medical attention immediately.

Children and the elderly are at greatest risk. For more information, please see the story on our website at richlandhealth.org

The Richland Public Health "Health Report" is a monthly production of the Community Health and Prevention Sciences Division. Suggestions and corrections, including mailing label corrections, are welcome. Call Shannon Nelson, CHPS Coordinator, at 419-774-4761 or email snelson@richlandhealth.org

"Health Quote"

Let us rather run the risk of wearing out than rusting out.

Theodore Roosevelt

November . . YTD

VITAL STATISTICS

The Vital Statistics division maintains records of all births and deaths in Richland County since 1908. For information on obtaining a birth or death certificate, check the website at richlandhealth.org or call 419-774-4500.

	TOTCHIDCH I I D	
Total Births (all ages)	1071282	
Births to Teens	280	
Repeat Births*	69 807	
N	Javambar VTD	
Total Deaths	152 1516	
Female	79 733	
Male	73 783	
Causes of Death		
Heart Related	25 426	
COVID-19 (coronavirus)		
Cancer		
Alzheimers/Dementia	12117	
Accidents (drugs/falls/crashes	92 4 92	
Lung Diseases	10 84	
Strokes/CVA	859	
Renal/Kidney	10 59	
Flu/Pneumonia	3 31	
Suicides	519	
Homicides	06	
Infant Mortality (see below).	I 4	
Other (not listed above)	12116	
Deaths Pending Autopsy	5 17	
*repeat births = 2nd or more	live births	
Birth & Death statistics include City of Shelby		

Infant Mortality: Richland County
November: 1 Year To Date: 4

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. Infant deaths are considered an important indicator of the overall health of a society. Deaths to residents occuring outside of Richland County are not reflected in county death statistics. KNOW the SAFE SLEEP ABC's: Alone, on Back, in a Crib.

CALLING THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT Main Number 419-774-4500 Public Health Clinic 419-774-4700 Public Health Nursing 419-774-4540 Environmental Health 419-774-4520 Com. Health Prev. Sciences 419-774-4761 WIC 419-774-4560

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ВЕТИВИ SERVICE REQUESTED

