

# Omicron variant spurs New York officials to recommend masking indoors

November 30 2021

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Amid growing concerns about the new Omicron variant, New York

Governor Kathy Hochul and New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi have advised all residents to wear masks while indoors.

"Today, I am issuing a Commissioner's Advisory **STRONGLY** recommending that all New Yorkers wear a mask **AT ALL TIMES** when indoors and in a public setting – like at your grocery, building lobbies, offices, and stores," Chokshi [tweeted](#).

"Omicron is just across the bridge in Ontario," Hochul said during a media briefing. "It's not a question of if it comes to New York, but when." According to a [statement](#) released Sunday by Ottawa Public Health in Ontario, Canada, "two individuals in Ottawa tested positive for the COVID-19 Omicron variant with recent travel from Nigeria."

Chokshi also said that NYC residents should continue to get vaccinated and regularly test for COVID-19, especially before and after holiday travel, *CBS News* reported.

There are currently no confirmed cases of the Omicron variant in New York City, according to the [health](#) commissioner.

"Delta remains the dominant strain—about 98% of sequenced specimens," Chokshi said. "We do anticipate detecting Omicron in the coming days, based on what we know about its global spread."

"Our understanding of Omicron will advance, and we'll be able to adjust our public health strategies accordingly," he added. "Until then, let's bring to bear our tried-and-true tools that are already helping us keep COVID-19 at bay."

Last Friday, Hochul [declared a state of emergency](#) due to a steady rise in COVID-19 cases over the past few months.

Hochul's executive order includes plans to boost hospital capacity and extra supplies ahead of a possible case surge.

Hochul said Monday that 2,829 people are currently hospitalized in New York State, but officials are expecting an increase in positive cases and hospitalizations following the holiday season.

"Mark my words, we're going to see a surge in the next five days," Hochul said.

**More information:** Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on [masking](#).

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