

Video: Will current COVID-19 treatments and therapies work against omicron?

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Credit: Mayo Clinic

Researchers are aggressively studying the emergence of the omicron variant. One of the many questions they're hoping to answer is how well current COVID-19 treatments and therapies will work against omicron.

"If you look at the structure of [omicron](#) and compare it to the structure of previous strains, including delta, the site where there is the most

change from the original strain is the spike protein," says Dr. Andrew Badley, chair of Mayo Clinic's COVID-19 Task Force.

That means current therapies that target the spike protein, such as monoclonal antibodies, may have reduced efficacy against the omicron [variant](#). Exactly how much is what researchers are working to determine.

"Some of the [monoclonal antibodies](#) may have slightly reduced activity against the omicron variant, but I don't think it's correct to say that it will have no protection," says Dr. Badley.

As for antiviral therapies, such as remdesivir, that work against the virus through a mechanism that does not involve the [spike protein](#), Dr. Badley says it is anticipated that omicron will be equally favorably treated with the existing therapies.

"In terms of other modes of [therapy](#) for COVID-19 disease at a hospitalized stage, for example, steroids and some of the other immunomodulatory agents, there's absolutely no reason to suspect that they will behave differently with omicron variant infections, should they require that level of care compared to delta or any of the others," says Dr. Badley.

He says it's also important to note that vaccination will provide some degree of protection, which is why getting vaccinated for COVID-19 remains the best thing the public can do in the setting of the omicron variant and future variants.

"The best we can do is to encourage vaccination and boosting according to current recommendations, to continue to practice masking and social distancing in congregate settings," says Dr. Badley.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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