

# China cites coronavirus on packaging, despite doubts abroad

January 18 2022

---



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a staff member disinfects parcels at a community under close-off management where a locally transmitted COVID-19 case was found in Haidian in Beijing, China on Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. Credit: Ren Chao/Xinhua via AP

Chinese state media say parcels mailed from overseas may have spread

the omicron variant of the coronavirus in Beijing and elsewhere, despite doubts among overseas health experts that the virus can be transmitted via packaging.

The State Post Bureau said it has ordered stronger measures to ventilate and disinfect sites where items mailed from overseas are handled. Postal workers must wear protective equipment, receive booster shots and undergo regular testing, it said on its website. International packages must be isolated, cleaned and held for a waiting period to ensure they are free from the virus, it said.

Global health experts say the virus mainly spreads through respiratory droplets when infected people breathe, speak, cough and sneeze.

The World Health Organization says coronaviruses "need a live animal or human host to multiply and survive and cannot multiply on the surface of food packages."

However, China has repeatedly emphasized what it calls the danger of infections from packaging, despite only trace amounts of the virus being found on such items, and has boosted testing of frozen food and other items shipped from overseas.

The Communist Party newspaper Global Times cited the Beijing Center for Disease Control and virologists as linking recent infections to packages from abroad. It said Tuesday that investigators found people newly infected had picked up packages mailed from Canada and the U.S.



A woman wearing a mask to protect from the coronavirus walks past parcels gathered near delivery tricycles in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. Chinese state media say parcels mailed from overseas may have spread the omicron variant of the coronavirus in Beijing and elsewhere, despite doubts among overseas health experts that the virus can be transmitted via packaging. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

China has locked down parts of Beijing's Haidian district following the detection of four cases, just weeks before the capital is to host the Winter Olympic Games. Another person in the southern technology hub of Shenzhen who tested positive for omicron handled packages sent from North America, the newspaper said.

An additional case was reported in the city's Chaoyang district, and an

office building in Shunyi, where the capital's main international airport is located, was placed under lockdown with all inside required to undergo testing after a suspected case was reported.

Local schools in Beijing have mostly been moved online in the two weeks before the start of the Lunar New Year holiday on Jan. 31.

China remains on high alert for new outbreaks ahead of the Olympics. Around 20 million people are under lockdown and mass testing has been ordered in entire cities where cases have been discovered.



A woman wearing a mask to protect from the coronavirus looks at a parcel near a delivery man in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. Chinese state media say parcels mailed from overseas may have spread the omicron variant of the coronavirus in Beijing and elsewhere, despite doubts among overseas health

experts that the virus can be transmitted via packaging. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan



Residents wearing masks to protect from the coronavirus walk past parcels gathered on the street waiting to be delivered in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. Chinese state media say parcels mailed from overseas may have spread the omicron variant of the coronavirus in Beijing and elsewhere, despite doubts among overseas health experts that the virus can be transmitted via packaging. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan



Workers and residents stand near a nucleic acid test station in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. The first reported case of the omicron variant has prompted stepped-up measures in Beijing, just weeks before it hosts the Winter Olympic Games. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan



Workers cleaning a dining area inside the main media center as preparations are underway for the Beijing Winter Olympics Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022, in Beijing.  
Credit: AP Photo/Denis Paquin



Workers adjust the glove ports at a nuclei test station in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. The first reported case of the omicron variant has prompted stepped-up measures in Beijing, just weeks before it hosts the Winter Olympic Games. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan





Workers and residents stand near a nuclei test station in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. The first reported case of the omicron variant has prompted stepped-up measures in Beijing, just weeks before it hosts the Winter Olympic Games. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

Beijing Games organizers announced Monday that only "selected" spectators will be permitted at the events, which officially open Feb. 4. Beijing had already announced that no fans from outside the country will be permitted and has not offered tickets to the general public.

China has largely avoided major virus outbreaks with lockdowns, mass testing and travel restrictions, although it continues to fight surges in several cities, including the port of Tianjin, about an hour from Beijing.

One city that has endured weeks of lockdown under China's "zero-COVID" policy appears to have received some relief. Falling numbers of cases in Xi'an, a city of 13 million famed as the home of the Terracotta Warrior statue army, have prompted authorities to gradually allow people to leave their homes and return to work.

Just one additional case was reported in the city among China's 127 new domestically transmitted cases announced Tuesday.

© 2022 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: China cites coronavirus on packaging, despite doubts abroad (2022, January 18)  
retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-china-media-foreign-parcels-infections.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--