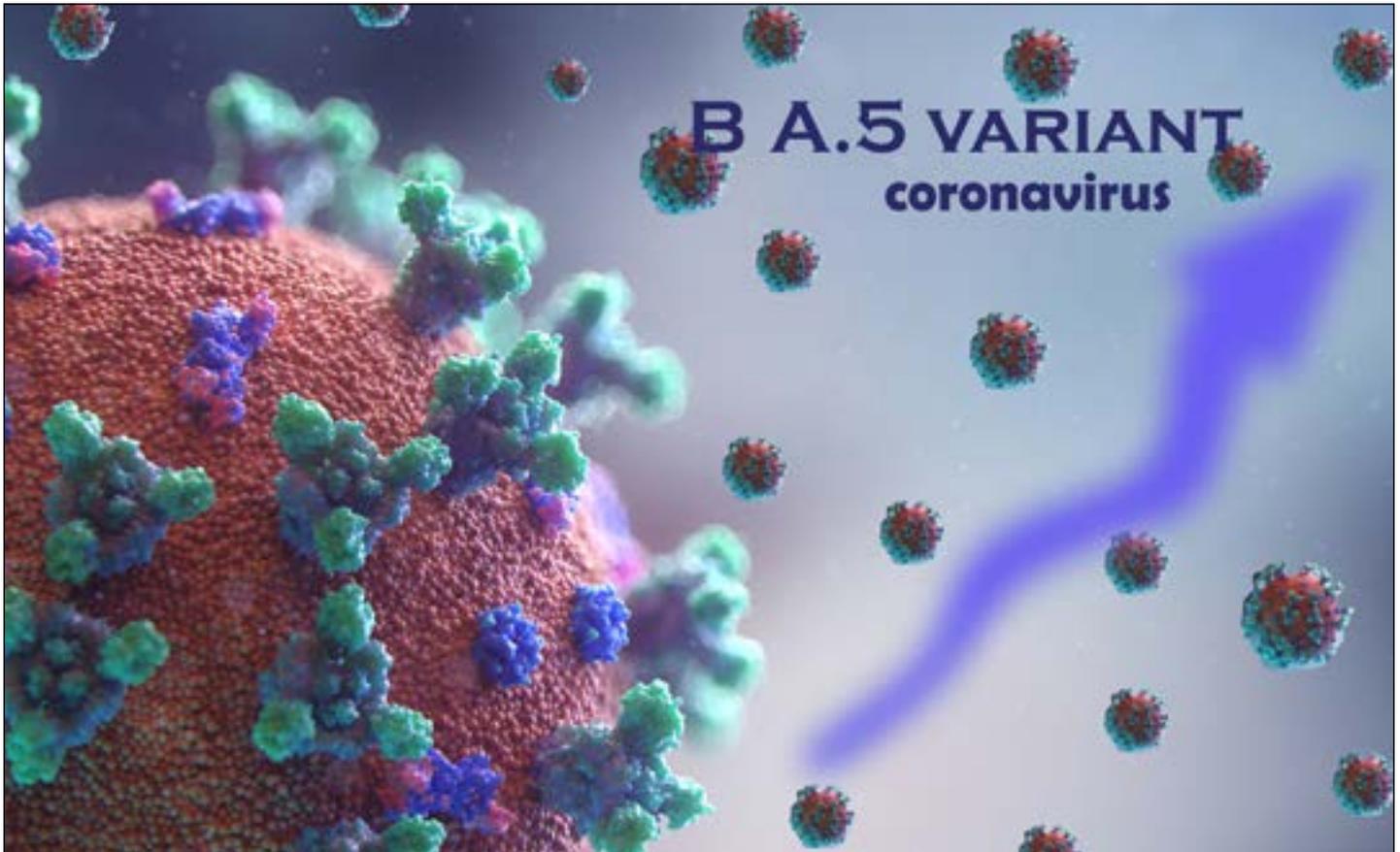


# HEALTH MATTERS



Island County COVID Response Community Guidance



**BA.5** is now the dominant COVID-19 variant in Washington state and across the country.

## **BA.5 variant evades immunity built up from vaccine, illnesses**

*Unvaccinated 'fivefold more likely' to become infected*

**T**o minimize the spread of COVID-19 and its variants in our community, the Island County COVID Response Team wants you to have the best information available to avoid

getting sick with the virus.

COVID-19 variant BA.5 is one we all need to be concerned about because of how easily it is transmitted and how easily it evades immunities built up from COVID-19 vaccinations and prior

COVID infections.

Dr. Gregory Poland, head of the Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group, said the BA.5 variant is hyperconta-

See **BA.5**, page 2



**IT'S POSSIBLE** to become infected with the BA.5 variant as soon as four weeks after being infected with another variant of COVID-19.

## **BA.5:** *Variant evades COVID immunities*

### **Continued from page 1**

gious and is contributing to increases in hospitalizations and ICU admissions. A new study published in *Nature* found the variant was four times more resistant to messenger RNA vaccines than earlier strains of omicron.

Earlier variants of COVID-19 mostly affected just the spike protein.

The BA.5 variant, however, has multiple mutations across its structure that allow it to grab onto and infect our cells. That means if you become infected with the BA.5 variant, and you are vaccinated and boosted, or previously had COVID-19, you may develop mild symptoms or be asymptomatic, but you also risk spreading it to those who are more vulnerable, including the immunocompromised.

You also may become infected with the BA.5 variant as soon as four weeks after being infected with a previous variant of COVID-19.

“Right now, we don’t have any evidence that it leads to a higher death rate. So that’s good,” said Poland.

“Nonetheless, among the unvaccinated with this variant, they’re about fivefold more likely to get infected than people who have been vaccinated and boosted, about 7½ times more likely to be hospitalized, and about 14 to 15 times more likely to die if they get infected.”

Poland said he believes the BA.5 variant essentially represents the evolution of the COVID-19 virus to be more contagious and evade the immune protection that people had from infection, vaccination or both.

Medical experts say the best way to avoid becoming sick and spreading the COVID-19 virus is to take the following simple steps:

- Avoid large gatherings when possible, especially indoors. This is one way to protect yourself and others. If you are holding an event, keep it outdoors, spread apart as much as possible, wear a well-fitted mask that covers the nose and mouth and encourage others to mask up.
- If you absolutely must gather indoors, make sure the space is well ventilated, practice social distancing,

wear a well-fitted mask that covers the nose and mouth and encourage others to mask up.

- Take a COVID-19 rapid home test to ensure you are infection-free before attending gatherings or traveling – even if you don’t display any symptoms, you may be infected with the virus.
- You may obtain a rapid home test by calling the Island County COVID Response Call Center at 360-678-2301 or, to have free test kits mailed to your home, go online to [sayyescovidhometest.org](https://sayyescovidhometest.org) or [covid.gov/test](https://covid.gov/test).
- Make sure you and your family members have their COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters up to date to prevent illness. This is critically important. You don’t want to spread it to those who are unvaccinated, immunocompromised and are therefore more likely to become seriously ill, require hospitalization and die from the virus.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren’t available, and;
- Stay home if you are sick.



# OMICRON BA.5

**Protect yourself. Protect others.**

You're doing great! Don't let down your guard.  
Stay safe by continuing to:

- Take a rapid home test before gathering or traveling
- Keep COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters up to date
- Gather safely, preferably outdoors
- Mask up in crowded spaces
- Wash your hands with soap and water
- If you're sick, STAY HOME!

**Get free at-home test kits online at**

[www.sayyescovidhometest.org](http://www.sayyescovidhometest.org) and [www.covid.gov/tests](http://www.covid.gov/tests)



Contact Island County COVID Response if you are symptomatic and want to be tested, are planning a large event and need home-test kits, or to get more information about protecting yourself against COVID-19.

**Call 360-678-2301. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday**

# 3rd, 4th doses may help lessen BA.5 illness

A third and fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose offered substantial protection among adults with healthy immune systems who were eligible to receive them during omicron variant evolution in early 2022, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report published July 15.

The findings of the study, in conjunction with recently published data showing people infected with BA.2 may also have antibodies that can protect against illness with BA.5, suggest that currently available vaccines may provide protection against serious illness caused by the currently circulating BA.5 variant.

To evaluate effectiveness of 2, 3, and 4 doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines — Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna — among adults with healthy immune systems, experts examined VISION Network data on more than 214,000 emergency department/urgent care visits and more than 58,000 hospitalizations with a COVID-19–like illness diagnosis in 10 U.S. states from mid-December 2021 through mid-June 2022.

## Study findings showed:

- When BA.1 was the predominant variant, vaccine effectiveness was 61% for two doses against COVID-19-as-



**GETTING VACCINATED** and boosted may provide protection against serious illness caused by the BA.5 variant..

sociated hospitalizations; effectiveness increased to between 85%-92% after receipt of a third/booster dose.

- When BA.2/BA.2.12.1 became predominant, vaccine effectiveness with two doses was 24% against COVID-19-associated hospitalizations and increased to 52%-69% after a third/booster dose.

- Patterns were similar for emergency department and urgent care encounters, with lower vaccine effectiveness during BA.2/BA.2.12.1 predominance and higher effectiveness with three or four doses compared to effectiveness with two doses.

- Among adults ages 50 years and older during BA.2/BA.2.12.1, vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19-associated hospitalization was 55% more than four months after a booster/third

dose and increased to 80% more than a week after the fourth dose

COVID-19 vaccines remain our single most important tool to protect people against serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

Getting vaccinated now will not prevent you from getting an authorized variant-specific vaccine in the fall or winter when they are recommended for you, according to the CDC.

Given recent increases in deaths and hospitalizations associated with the BA.5 variant, the CDC recommends that everyone stay up to date with recommended COVID-19 vaccinations, including additional booster doses for those who are moderately to severely immunocompromised and adults over 50.



**“GETTING THEM VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19 MEANS LESS WORRY AND MORE PLAY.”**



Safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone ages 6 months and older. Learn more about protecting your child at [www.cdc.gov/covid-19/children-teens.html](http://www.cdc.gov/covid-19/children-teens.html)



**A NOVAVAX** test subject receives a vaccine during trials for the COVID-19 vaccine.

# Protein-based Novavax OK'd by FDA for emergency use

On July 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency use authorization, or EUA, for the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine for people 18 years of age and older.

Approval by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup and standing orders allowing delivery of the vaccine in Washington state are still pending.

“FDA emergency use authorization of our COVID-19 vaccine provides the U.S. with access to the first protein-based COVID-19 vaccine,” said Stanley C. Erck, president and CEO of Novavax.

“Authorizing an additional COVID-19 vaccine expands the available vaccine options for the prevention of COVID-19, including the most severe outcomes that can occur such as hospitalization and death,” said FDA

Commissioner Robert M. Califf, M.D.

“Today’s authorization offers adults in the United States who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine another option that meets the FDA’s rigorous standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use authorization,” Califf said.

“COVID-19 vaccines remain the best preventive measure against severe disease caused by COVID-19 and I encourage anyone who is eligible for, but has not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine, to consider doing so.”

The FDA has determined that the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, Adjuvanted has met the statutory criteria for an EUA. The data support that the known and potential benefits of the vaccine outweigh its known and potential risks

in people 18 years of age and older, and that this vaccine may be effective in preventing COVID-19.

In making its determination, the FDA said in a prepared statement that it can assure the public and medical community that a thorough analysis and evaluation of the available safety and effectiveness data and manufacturing information have been conducted.

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine, Adjuvanted is administered as a two-dose primary series, three weeks apart. The vaccine contains the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein and Matrix-M adjuvant.

Adjuvants are incorporated into some vaccines to enhance the immune response of the vaccinated individual. The spike protein in this vaccine is

See **NOVAVAX**, page 7



**A NOVAVAX** scientist conducts vaccine development research.

# **NOVAVAX:** *FDA gives OK to administer*

**Continued from page 6**

produced in insect cells; the Matrix M-adjuvant contains saponin extracts from the bark of the Soapbark tree that is native to Chile.

“After a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the data, and assessment of the manufacturing processes and information, as well as input from the FDA’s committee of external independent advisors, the FDA’s medical and scientific experts determined that the vaccine meets the FDA’s high standards for safety and effectiveness for emergency use authorization,” said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

The vaccine was assessed in an ongoing randomized, blinded, placebo-controlled study conducted in the

United States and Mexico. The effectiveness of the vaccine was assessed in clinical trial participants 18 years of age and older who did not have evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection through six days after receiving the second vaccine dose. Among the study participants, approximately 17,200 received the vaccine and approximately 8,300 received saline placebo.

Overall, the vaccine was 90.4% effective in preventing mild, moderate or severe COVID-19, with 17 cases of COVID-19 occurring in the vaccine group and 79 cases in the placebo group.

No cases of moderate or severe COVID-19 were reported in participants who received the vaccine, compared with nine cases of moderate COVID-19 and four cases of severe COVID-19 reported in placebo recipients. In the subset of participants 65 years of age and older, the vaccine was 78.6% effective.

The clinical trial was conducted prior to the emergence of delta and omicron variants.

The safety of the vaccine was assessed in approximately 26,000 clinical trial participants who received the vaccine and approximately 25,000 who

received placebo.

The most commonly reported side effects by vaccine recipients included pain/tenderness, redness and swelling at the injection site, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, joint pain, nausea/vomiting and fever.

Approximately 21,000 vaccine recipients had at least two months of safety follow-up after their second dose.

A fact sheet for vaccination providers includes a warning that clinical trial data provide evidence for increased risks of myocarditis — inflammation of the heart muscle — and pericarditis — inflammation of tissue surrounding the heart — following administration of Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine, Adjuvanted.

The fact sheet for Recipients and Caregivers also reports that, in most people who have had myocarditis or pericarditis after receiving the vaccine, symptoms began within 10 days following vaccination and that vaccine recipients should seek medical attention right away if they experience any of the following symptoms after vaccination: chest pain, shortness of breath, feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering or pounding heart.

# WA Notify remains a powerful tool in fight against COVID-19

This past April, Sheridan — who lives on her family farm in Snohomish, Washington — made the decision to attend a family wedding in Texas.

“I was very careful when traveling — I made sure to wear my mask while in transit and in large gatherings. I’m up to date on my vaccines. I also did a self-test before traveling and right before the wedding to make sure I wasn’t positive. When I arrived back home, I felt fine,” she said.

Shortly after arriving home she received a phone notification from WA Notify, a free application she installed on her smartphone, that she had been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

“I forgot I even had the application — I never received a notification before. I already had self-tests on hand and quickly found out I was indeed positive,” she recalled.

Since the pandemic began, Sheridan said she and her husband had carefully followed advice from public health officials on how to stop the spread of the virus. But if not for WA Notify, it could have been days before she learned she came back from Texas as infected with COVID-19.

For Sheridan, this is particularly important as she is at higher risk of developing severe disease and becoming hospitalized from COVID-19.

With the WA Notify alert, she was able to start her isolation to avoid spreading the virus to her husband or any others.

“We were supposed to visit my in-laws in Issaquah ... that weekend.

Scan QR code  
to add  
WA Notify to  
your phone



I wouldn’t have had symptoms at that stage and would have traveled to see them. They both recently recovered from cancer — it would have been devastating to expose them to that.”

In addition to isolating from others, with her test results she was able to anonymously inform other WA Notify users with whom she had been in close contact.

“The ability to know so quickly that you have been exposed and test right away is so crucial — it is a critical reminder that we are still in this pandemic, and we still need to be careful to help protect those around us.”

As of June 2022, it is estimated that less than 10% of COVID-19 cases are reported in Washington state.

By adding WA Notify to your smartphone, you can be notified if you’ve spent time near another WA Notify user who later tests positive. If you test positive (including with a self-test), you can anonymously let other WA Notify users know they may have been exposed — giving them the opportunity to get tested, isolate and help stop the spread of COVID-19.

No location tracking technology is used, so notifications are anonymous. No personal information is shared when you notify others they may have been exposed.

A few days after testing positive, Sheridan’s symptoms began to intensify. She had COVID-19 previously in late

2021 and was very sick for weeks. This time around, she was able to access oral antiviral medication through the federal government’s Test to Treat initiative, which eased her symptoms and reduced the risk of hospitalization.

Receiving a timely exposure notification through WA Notify helped her to get this medication, as it must be prescribed by a doctor within five days of beginning symptoms.

“I want to express my gratitude for having these free tools available to me. I’ll never really know the detrimental impacts had I passed COVID-19 onto other people in my family or in other parts of my community. Because I was able to access these tools and I didn’t pass on COVID-19 to anyone else — that makes me really grateful.”

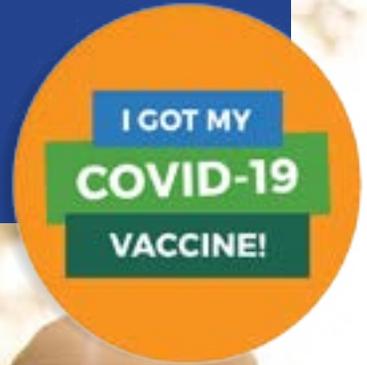
## How to add WA Notify to your mobile phone

Like Sheridan, you may have forgotten that you have WA Notify on your phone. WA Notify can be easily downloaded on a smartphone, and you can confirm in the settings section if the application is installed and active.

As of June 21, 2022, more than 3.34 million people have activated the WA Notify application.

You can scan the QR code above or download [WA Notify](#) to your phone. The app is available for both Android and iPhone.

“MY MOM SAID GETTING VACCINATED HELPS PROTECT ME FROM GETTING REALLY SICK.”



COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Learn more about protecting your child at [www.cdc.gov/covid-19/children-teens.html](https://www.cdc.gov/covid-19/children-teens.html)





**PANDEMIC EBT** benefits are available to families with young children who are eligible for basic food benefits or free or reduced-price school lunches.

# P-EBT benefits available for summer

Thanks to federal COVID-19 relief funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, many families in Washington state will soon have another round of pandemic food assistance available to them to help buy groceries while children are home during the summer.

Electronic Benefits Transfer, or Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT, are food benefits available to families with young children who are eligible for basic food benefits as well as school-aged children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meal programs.

P-EBT benefits can be used to shop at any grocery store, farmers market or food retailer that accepts EBT card payments.

The Public Charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits and will not impact immigration status.

The Department of Social and Health Services recently received federal approval to implement a third round of P-EBT, which includes benefits for children under age 6 and for school-

aged children for summer 2022.

Families will start to receive these benefits beginning late-July and through the end of the summer.

The first and second rounds of P-EBT benefits helped provide food security for more than 400,000 Washington children in the past two years.

According to June census data, nearly one in 10 Washington households reported not having enough food for their household in the last seven days.

**P-EBT Children Under 6 program:** Qualifying children under age 6 who live in a household that receives Basic Food benefits may receive \$43 for each month they received Basic Food assistance from September 2021 through June 2022.

For the summer 2022 P-EBT program, qualifying children under age 6 as well as school-aged children will receive a one-time lump sum of \$391 per child to cover the summer period through July and August. School-aged children enrolled in Washington

state public K-12 schools through June 2022 who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals are eligible for Summer 2022 P-EBT benefits. Children under age 6 will receive benefits under this plan as long as they receive Basic Food assistance during July and August.

Both benefits programs are separate from a P-EBT 2021-22 School Year program, which has not been approved by USDA at this time.

To ensure all eligible children receive P-EBT benefits, families must complete the free and reduced-price meal program application through their school district, or apply and be approved for Basic Food assistance by Aug. 31.

P-EBT benefits for all eligible children will be loaded onto a special P-EBT card that was mailed automatically to each eligible child in the previous year. Newly eligible children will receive new cards in the mail.

See **P-EBT**, page 11

# Grants aim to improve state food system

The Washington State Department of Agriculture, or WSDA, is offering more than \$16 million in grants to help small farms and food businesses withstand ongoing economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grants are designed to improve the strength and resiliency Washington's local food systems.

Applications are now open for the WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure grants.

Applications must be submitted by Aug. 10.

The Washington State Legislature provided funds from the federal American Recovery Plan Act to improve local food system infrastructure, supply chains, and market access for farms, food processors, and food distributors.

The Legislature prioritized support for small business, including those owned by women and minorities.

"The COVID-19 pandemic affected small farms and food businesses," Derek Sandison, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, said. "Recovery and support of small businesses engaged in the local food supply system is essential to enhancing resiliency and assuring that adequate food supplies are available to protect public health."

The grant is available to farmers, ranchers, food processors, food distributors, and other small businesses and organizations that aggregate, process, manufacture, transport, store, or sell



**APPLICATIONS ARE** now open for WSDA Local Food System Infrastructure grants. Applications are due Aug. 10.

foods within that have been grown, caught, or raised in Washington state for Washington consumers.

Grant amounts range from \$15,000 to \$1 million.

Grants awards will be based on the proposed project's alignment with the purpose of the grant and achievability within the grant period.

Grant funds can be used for costs to improve local food system post-harvest infrastructure and market access such as equipment, facility improvements,

supply chain and market access coordination, food safety improvements, workforce development, and related operating costs.

For complete details on grant guidelines and to apply, visit [agr.wa.gov/grants](http://agr.wa.gov/grants) or email to [smallfarms@agr.wa.gov](mailto:smallfarms@agr.wa.gov).

The grant program is part of WSDA's Focus on Food Initiative, ensuring safe, nutritious food is effectively produced and distributed throughout Washington.

## **P-EBT:** *Grants to feed children through summer*

### **Continued from page 10**

Families who have misplaced or gotten rid of previous P-EBT cards can order new ones by calling the P-EBT Contact Center at 833-518-0282. Future installments will be made directly to eligible children's P-EBT cards, so families should keep all cards for any additional benefits.

New in 2022, families can sign up for text message alerts about the status of their child's P-EBT by going to [textpebt.dshs.wa.gov](http://textpebt.dshs.wa.gov) and filling out a simple

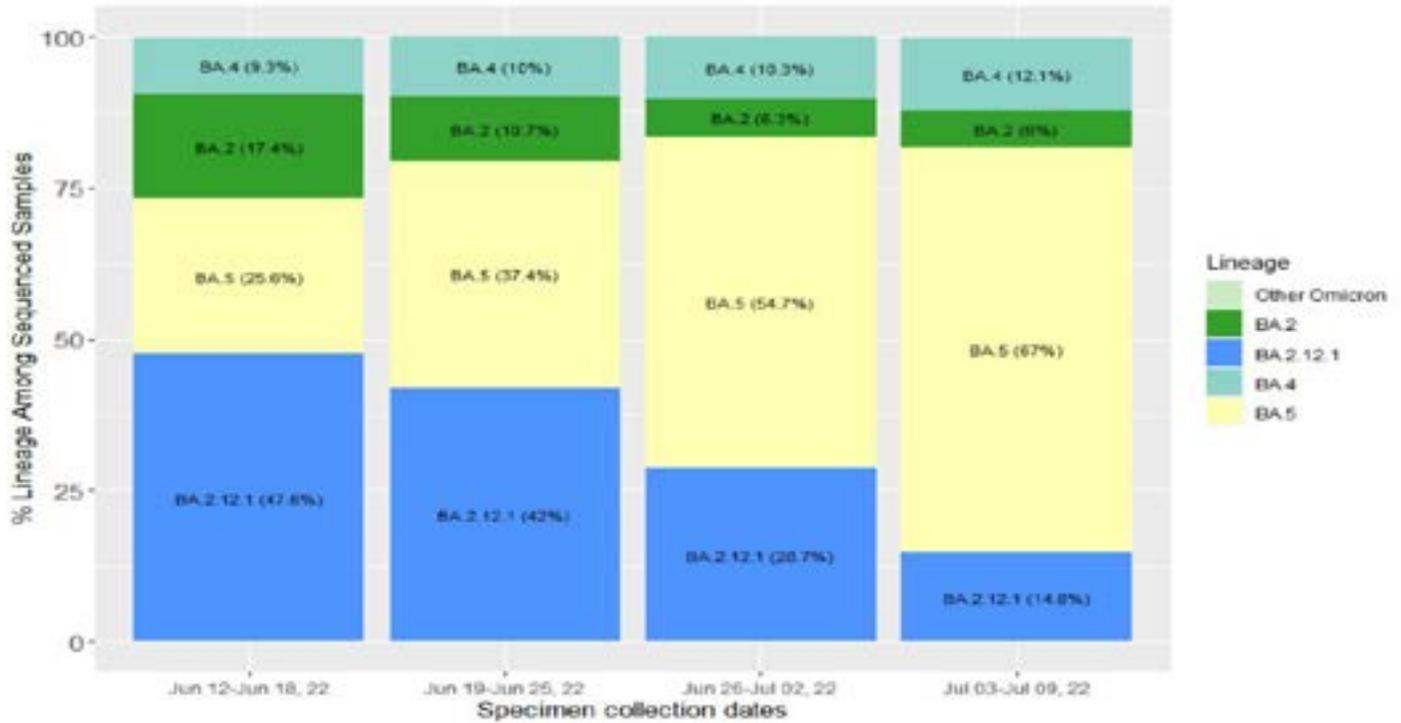
verification form. For full details and additional questions about P-EBT benefits, visit [dshs.wa.gov/PEBT](http://dshs.wa.gov/PEBT) or call the P-EBT Contact Center at 833-518-0282 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday (except observed holidays).

P-EBT benefits do not replace any food assistance program already offered, including free summer meals or meals provided in child care centers. Families are encouraged to continue participating in a summer meal program at their local schools and com-

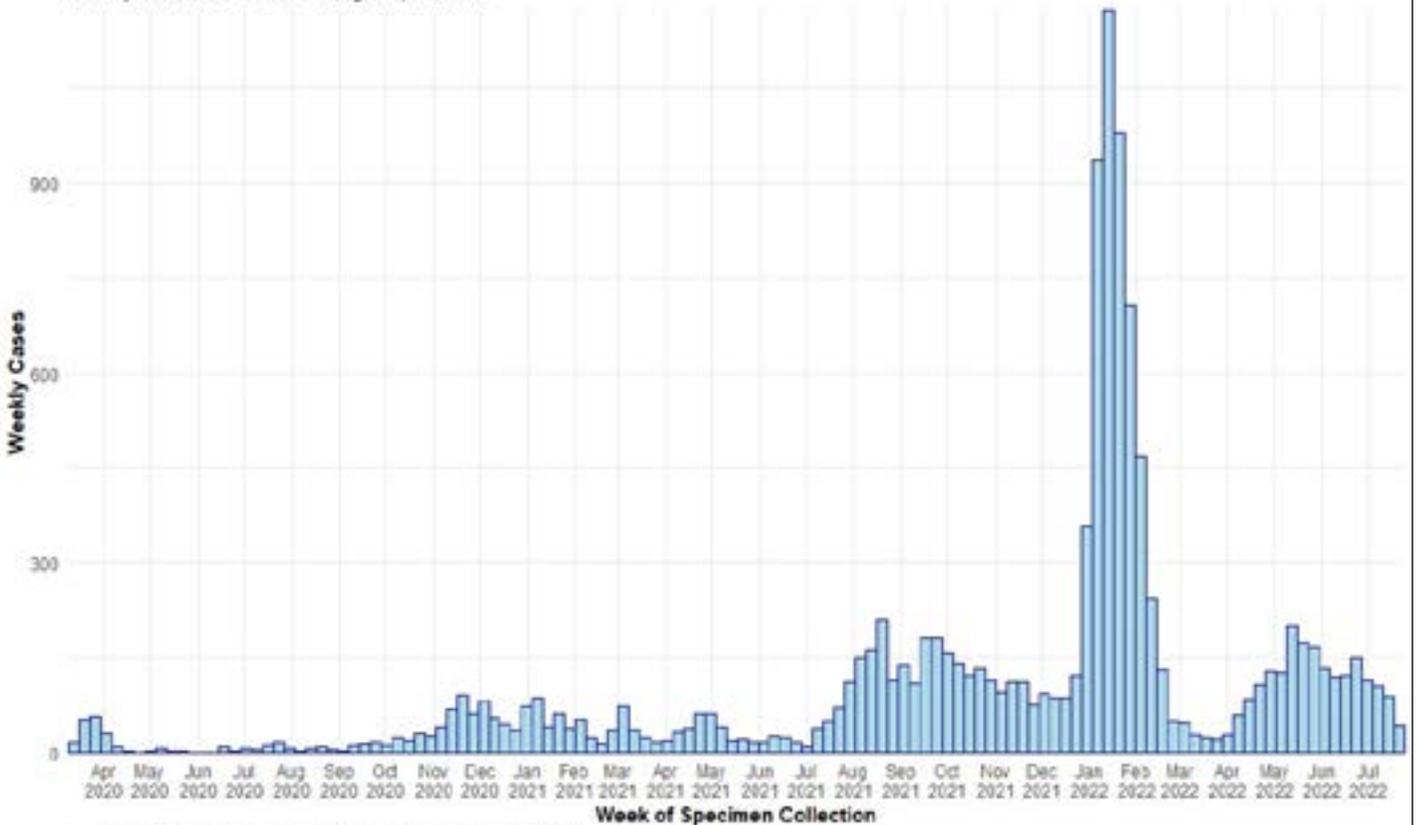
munity locations, even if they receive P-EBT benefits.

To find a nearby Summer Meals site, families can search online, call or text. Search Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's English-language online Summer Meals Locator, call 866-3-HUNGRY (866-348-6479) or text "Food" to 304-304. In Spanish, families can search the Spanish-language Summer Meals locator online, call 877-8-HAMBRE (877-842-6273) or text "Comida" to 304-304.

# SARS-CoV-2 lineages circulating in Washington state



**Island County COVID-19 Cases**  
Weekly incidence of cases during the pandemic



n = 11972 Island County cases. Collection dates range from Mon 09 Mar 2020 to Wed 20 Jul 2022.  
2 case(s) missing date of onset and not shown

WADOH Transmission Level	CDC Community Impact Level		
<b>HIGH</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>		
7-day Case Rate - 104	7-day Case Rate	7-day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate	COVID-19 Occupancy 7-day Average
<b>100+</b>	<b>&lt;200</b>	<b>10-19.9</b>	<b>&lt;10%</b>

#### 14-Day Case Rate

Date	N	Population	Rate per 100,000
06/15/2022 – 06/28/2022	265	86,350	306.89
06/22/2022 – 07/05/2022	237	86,350	274.46
06/29/2022 – 07/12/2022	190	86,350	220.03
07/06/2022 – 07/19/2022	196	86,350	226.98

No. of COVID-19 cases in Washington state: **1,713,870** \*

No. of COVID-19 Deaths in Washington state: **13,509** \*

No. of COVID-19 Deaths in Island County: **90** \*

\* As of July 21, 2022

#### Summary Table of Island County Count Positive COVID-19 Cases

Date	Count	Change
06/30/2022	11669	+155
07/07/2022	11768	+99
07/14/2022	11867	+99
07/21/2022	11972	+105

#### Island County Total Known Positive COVID-19 Cases by Location

Location	Positive Count	Death Count
Camano Island	2814	14
Clinton	574	5
Coupeville	885	15
Freeland	513	7
Greenbank	110	0
Langley	388	2
Oak Harbor	6679	47
Missing Accurate Zip	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11972</b>	<b>90</b>

#### Vaccinated Island County Residents

Number of Island County residents who have initiated primary series

**59,807**

Population (6 months+) eligible to be vaccinated

**84,974**

Data as of 11:59 p.m. July 18, 2022  
Source: Washington State Department of Health Data Dashboard

#### 7-Day Hospitalization Rate

Date	N	Population	Rate per 100,000
06/21/2022 – 06/27/2022	6	86,350	6.95
06/28/2022 – 07/04/2022	7	86,350	8.11
07/05/2022 – 07/11/2022	8	86,350	9.26
07/11/2022 – 07/17/2022	14	86,350	16.21

# Test Positive for COVID-19?

If you received a positive COVID test result, please carefully review the information below:

## Step 1: Take care of yourself

Pay attention to your symptoms. If symptoms worsen, call your healthcare provider for guidance.

Call 911 if you have:

- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Unusual feelings of confusion or unable to respond
- Trouble breathing
- Lips or face have a blue or purple tint

## Step 2: Stay home & away from others. Isolate for at least 5 days

- Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household.
- Don't share personal household items such as cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when you need to be around other people. Tight-fitting masks such as KN95s and three-ply surgical masks offer the best protection while cloth masks the least protection.
- Everyone in isolation should wear a mask when around others for 10 days from their first symptom, or the date of positive test if they don't have symptoms.

An antigen test is recommended on **DAY 5** to determine if you are still infectious. If you test positive, you should isolate for another five days.

If, after another five days, you exhibit no symptoms, or symptoms are improving, you may be around others but should wear a tight-fitting mask until **DAY 10** when around others.

For more detailed information about when you can leave isolation, please review CDC guidelines.

## Step 3: Complete online form

First, notify the **Island County COVID Response Team** of your positive test result by completing the online [positive test reporting form](#), which can also be located by scanning the QR code at right. If you are unable to report your positive result online, call the **Island County COVID Response Call Center at 360-678-2301**. The Call Center can assist you in reporting your result. Next, notify your place of work or school that you tested positive.



## Step 4: Notify close contacts of your diagnosis

Notify anyone you live with, traveled with in a vehicle, or who was within six feet of you for 15 minutes or more two days before your symptoms began, or if you have no symptoms, two days before you took your test.

**For your close contacts:**

- If they are fully vaccinated and boosted, they do not need to quarantine, but they should wear a tight-fitting mask around others for 10 days, monitor themselves for any signs or symptoms of COVID and seek medical attention or testing if they develop symptoms of COVID.
- If they are not fully vaccinated and boosted, they should remain in quarantine for five days, then they should wear a tight-fitting mask around others for an additional five days, monitor themselves for any signs or symptoms of COVID and seek medical attention or testing if they develop symptoms of COVID.
- They should consider obtaining an over-the-counter rapid test (if available) to help minimize potentially exposing others. Free rapid test kits are available for close contacts from Island County COVID Response by calling 360-678-2301.
- For more detailed information go to [Quarantine](#) guidance online.

