

Myth-busters: COVID-19 Delta variant

We continue to uncover the truth behind common COVID-19 rumors so you have the most accurate information.

What exactly happens when a virus variant appears?

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) "viruses constantly change through mutation and a variant can have one or more mutations that differentiate it from other variants in circulation." The CDC also shared that there are variant classifications that help the interagency group focus on rapid characterization of emerging variants and actively monitor the variant's potential impact on critical countermeasures, including vaccines and diagnostics.

The variant classifications are:

- **Variant of Interest (VOI):** A variant with specific genetic markers that have been associated with changes to receptor binding, reduced efficacy of treatments, predicted increase in transmissibility or disease severity.
- **Variant of Concern (VOC):** A variant for which there is evidence of an increase in transmissibility, more severe disease, reduced effectiveness of treatments or vaccines.
- **Variant of High Consequence (VOHC):** A variant of high consequence has clear evidence that prevention measures or medical countermeasures have significantly reduced effectiveness relative to previously circulating variants.

What is the Delta variant?

The Delta variant is a VOC that is presently the most highly contagious COVID-19 virus strain, according to [Yale Medicine](#). It was first identified in India, the combination of one variant strain from Brazil and another from California. The first official Delta case in the U.S. was diagnosed in March and since then Delta has become the dominant strain in the U.S. with most new infections in the last few weeks being from that variant.

What can I do to protect myself against the Delta variant?

Get vaccinated! Despite that fact that this variant and others have been gaining traction to become dominant worldwide, the large number of people getting vaccinated continues to drive down the case numbers in the U.S., said The New York Times in this published article, [The Delta Variant: What Scientists Know](#). To help protect yourself, your family, friends and colleagues, we encourage you to get vaccinated as soon as possible because vaccination is the best protection against all variants of COVID-19.

You can reach out to the HR COVID-19 response team for assistance to locate and schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. Employees will have to either submit their request via [HR4U](#) or by calling 844-694-4748 and selecting option #2, then option #4 for COVID-19 related inquiries, then option #3 for the Vaccine Concierge.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [eWeb/Virus](#).