

SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing and Variants in Washington State

Washington State Department of Health

June 22, 2022



Washington State Department of
Health

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Next generation sequencing is a set of laboratory methods that scientists use to scan a viral genome to determine the genome sequence of a virus. A genome sequence of a virus is referred to as its “genomic fingerprint,” and can reveal mutations in a virus that make it unique. Mutations are changes in a genome sequence and occur naturally over time.

Scientists compare viral genomes to better understand how viruses can spread from person to person. Sequencing allows public health officials to detect clusters of cases, and monitor new lineages. Groups of same-species viruses that share a set of genome mutations are referred to as a lineage. Some lineages may have characteristics such as the ability to spread more quickly, or cause more severe disease. These lineages are classified as variants of interest, variants being monitored, or variants of high concern.

Throughout this report, we refer to the scientific name of the virus SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19. Sequencing can only be performed on samples that are processed in laboratories and where swabs are stored in liquid that is compatible with sequencing, which means only samples used for molecular tests (such as PCR) can be included. For this reason, this report is limited to confirmed cases only. The genomes that are sequenced and compared are those of the virus, not humans.

At a glance (data through June 22, 2022)

- During the month of May 2022, **8.2%** of all confirmed molecular COVID-19 cases were sequenced. This number is preliminary and will change over time as additional specimens are received from the previous month.
- **101,827 (8.8%)** COVID-19 cases in Washington state have sequencing information available since January 2021.

CDC currently categorizes variants as Variants of High Consequence (VOHC), Variants of Concern (VOC), Variants of Interest (VOI) and Variants Being Monitored (VBM). There are currently no VOHC and VOI so only VOC and VBM are detailed in this report.

Variants of Concern

Variant	Area first detected	Background	Cumulative Washington cases detected	First detection in Washington*	Most recent detection in Washington*
Omicron (B.1.1.529 and BA lineages)	South Africa	Early research indicates evidence for increased transmissibility, immune evasion, and lower risk of hospitalization and death, relative to Delta. Approved vaccines are effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against the Omicron variant.	22,925	Nov 29, 21	May 23, 22

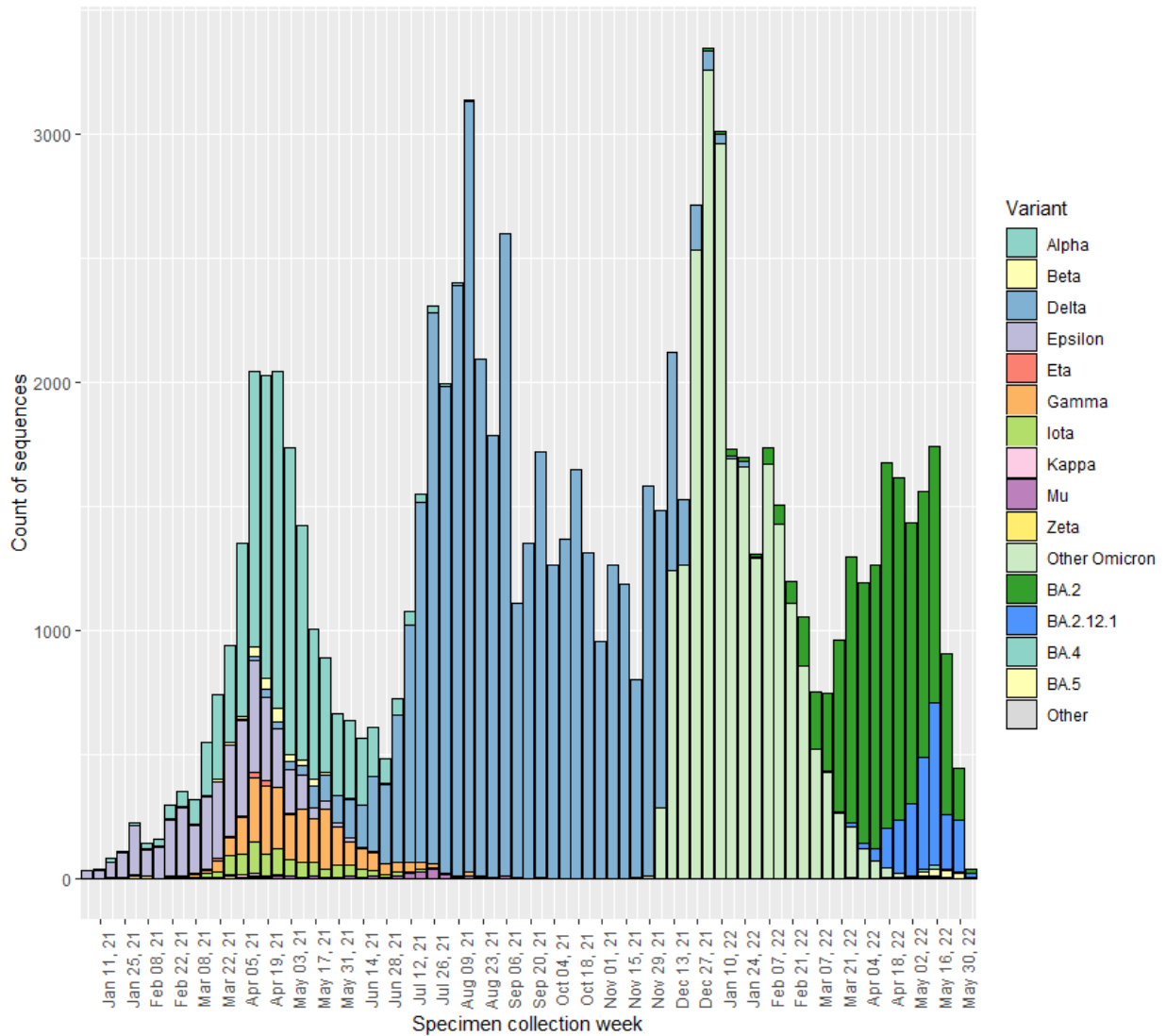
*Detection dates are based on the date a sample is collected, it can take several weeks before a variant result is completed and added to the report

Variants Being Monitored

Variant	Area first detected	Cumulative Washington cases detected	First detection in Washington*	Most recent detection in Washington*
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	United Kingdom	10,324	Jan 07, 21	Sep 08, 21
Beta (B.1.351)	South Africa	282	Jan 29, 21	Jun 29, 21
Delta (B.1.617.2 and AY lineages)	India	38,778	Apr 03, 21	Feb 28, 22
Epsilon (B.1.427 / B.1.429)	California	4,194	Dec 11, 20	Jun 24, 21
Eta (B.1.525)	New York	92	Feb 02, 21	Jun 08, 21
Gamma (P.1)	Brazil	2,494	Feb 06, 21	Dec 02, 21
Iota (B.1.526)	New York	934	Jan 21, 21	Aug 20, 21
Kappa (B.1.617.1)	India	46	Mar 22, 21	Jun 14, 21
Mu (B.1.621)	Colombia	191	Apr 09, 21	Dec 20, 21
Zeta (P.2)	Brazil	45	Jan 18, 21	Apr 20, 21

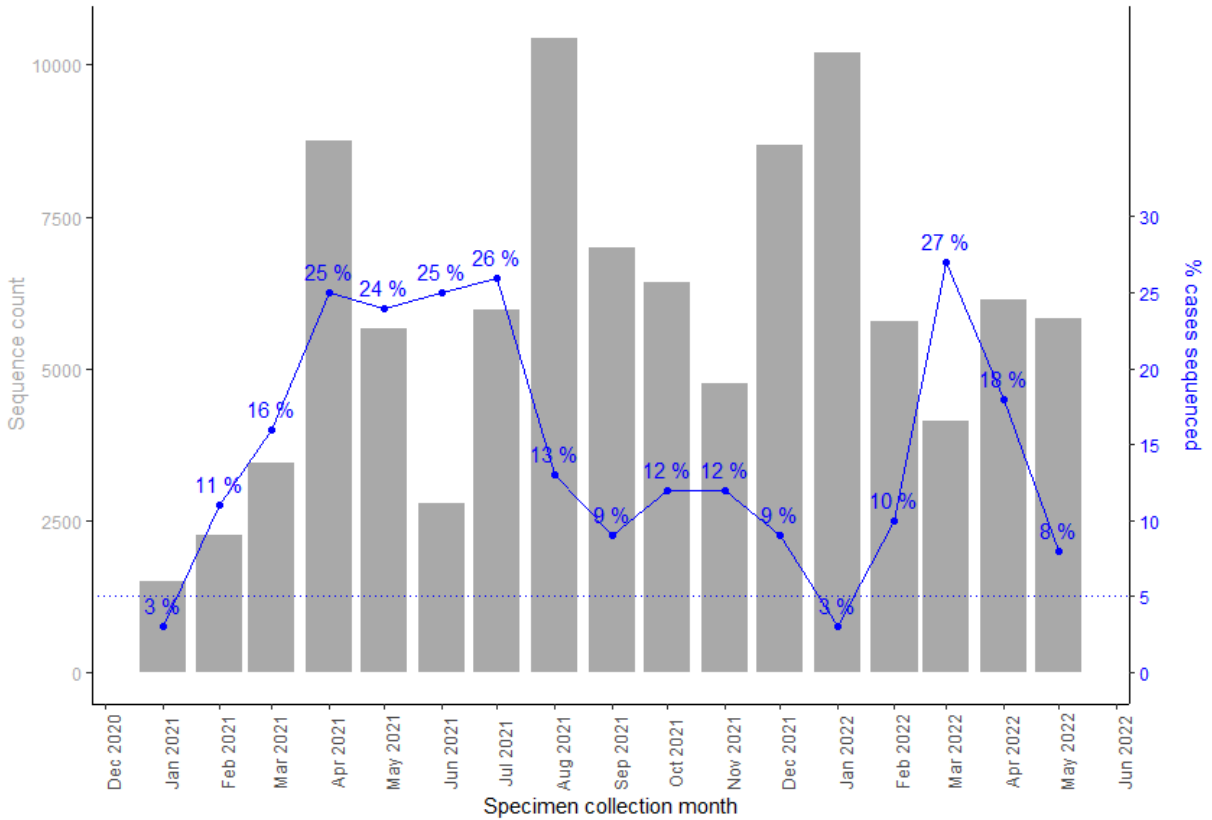
*Detection dates are based on the date a sample is collected, it can take several weeks before a variant result is completed and added to the report

Epidemiologic curve of variants being monitored and variants of concern by week of specimen collection date from January 01, 2021 to June 11, 2022



- The above graph shows the total number of variants detected by the week the specimen was collected from a patient.
- Sequencing can be performed on stored patient specimens at any time, so these numbers may change as additional specimens are sequenced.
- This graph shows all specimens sequenced, including specimens sequenced during outbreaks and other targeted sequencing efforts.
- "Other Omicron " includes B.1.1.529, BA.1 and BA.3 sublineages

Number of specimens sequenced, and percent of Washington State confirmed COVID-19 cases that have been sequenced by specimen collection date from January 2021 through May 2022.

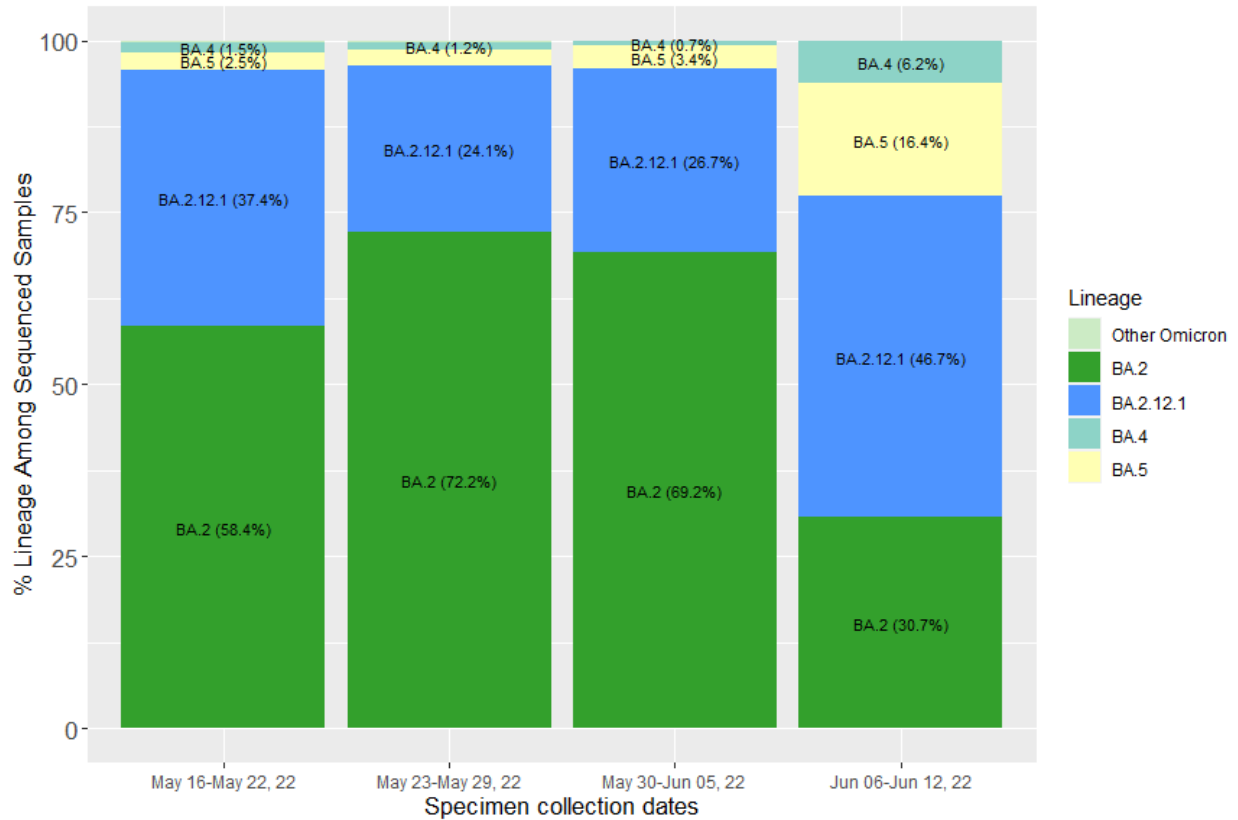


- Samples are not sequenced for every confirmed COVID-19 case. The above graph shows the total number of specimens sequenced (gray bars) and the percent of all confirmed cases (blue line) that have had sequencing performed each month. Data from the previous month may still be incomplete.
- Sequencing can be performed on stored specimens at any time, so numbers from past months may change if stored specimens are sequenced.

SARS-CoV-2 Lineages Circulating in Washington State

The graph below shows the change in proportion of select SARS-CoV-2 lineages by time period. A viral lineage is a group of viruses that descend from a common ancestor with shared genetic characteristics, allowing them to be grouped together. As the proportions of variants increase, the proportion of other lineages will decrease.

NOTE: The data on this graph come from cases that are randomly selected for sequencing statewide, Cases sequenced because they were part of an outbreak or were otherwise manually selected for sequencing are excluded.



The chart above shows the proportions of the most common SARS-CoV-2 lineages circulating in Washington grouped in one-week intervals. Proportions are calculated using data which are subject to change over time and will be updated as more data becomes available, including data from prior time periods. **Due to the time it takes to complete sequencing, the most recent time period is based on a very small number of sequences and likely to be adjusted over time.**

To see the national trends, visit the CDC's [variant proportions page](#).

The table below shows the current number of variants of concern (VOC) detected by county of home address since January 2022.

County	VOC					Total current VOC specimens sequenced
	Other Omicron	BA.2	BA.2.12.1	BA.4	BA.5	
Adams	65	2	0	0	0	67
Asotin	14	2	1	0	0	17
Benton	559	77	18	0	0	654
Chelan	171	42	18	0	0	231
Clallam	212	124	8	1	0	345
Clark	350	247	65	1	1	664
Columbia	6	1	0	0	0	7
Cowlitz	319	79	20	0	0	418
Douglas	112	30	6	0	0	148
Ferry	10	3	2	0	0	15
Franklin	464	30	9	0	0	503
Garfield	0	1	0	0	0	1
Grant	268	14	7	0	0	289
Grays Harbor	398	89	17	2	0	506
Island	71	111	9	0	1	192
Jefferson	68	11	4	0	1	84
King	6,618	6,575	1,219	29	65	14,506
Kitsap	276	188	31	0	0	495
Kittitas	68	16	2	0	0	86
Klickitat	18	4	2	0	0	24
Lewis	246	13	2	0	0	261
Lincoln	6	3	0	0	0	9
Mason	110	31	3	0	1	145
Okanogan	139	6	0	0	0	145

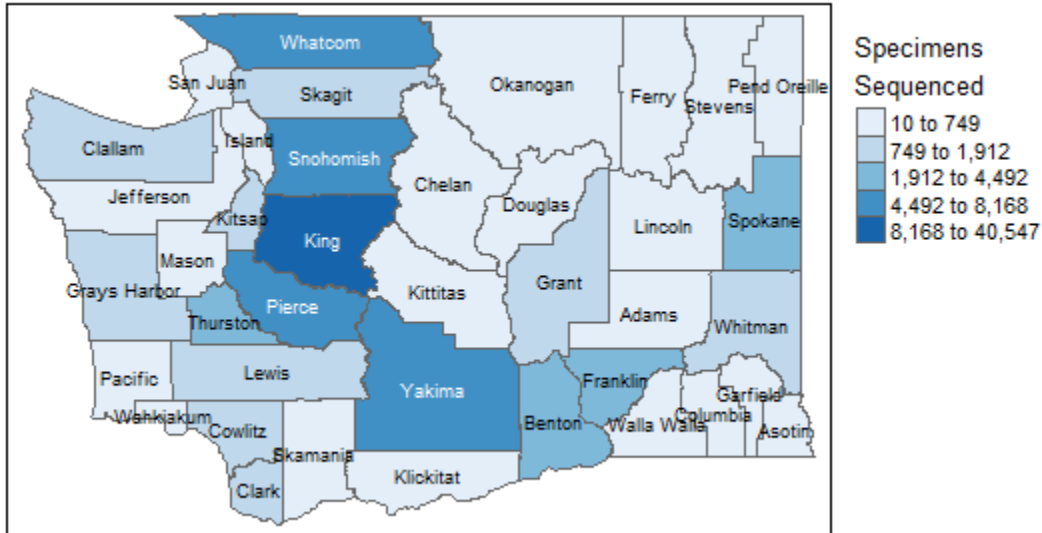
County	VOC					Total current VOC specimens sequenced
	Other Omicron	BA.2	BA.2.12.1	BA.4	BA.5	
Pacific	111	12	12	0	0	135
Pend Oreille	13	0	0	0	0	13
Pierce	1,247	635	125	6	2	2,015
San Juan	16	5	1	0	0	22
Skagit	167	263	43	0	1	474
Skamania	6	0	1	0	1	8
Snohomish	1,111	1,299	221	1	10	2,642
Spokane	711	149	54	0	0	914
Stevens	28	2	0	0	0	30
Thurston	1,242	204	56	0	2	1,504
Wahkiakum	7	6	0	0	0	13
Walla Walla	170	24	41	0	0	235
Whatcom	649	1,241	227	4	6	2,127
Whitman	188	55	8	0	0	251
Yakima	1,348	86	21	0	0	1,455

- In this table, "Other Omicron" includes all B.1.1.529, BA.1, and BA.3 sublineages

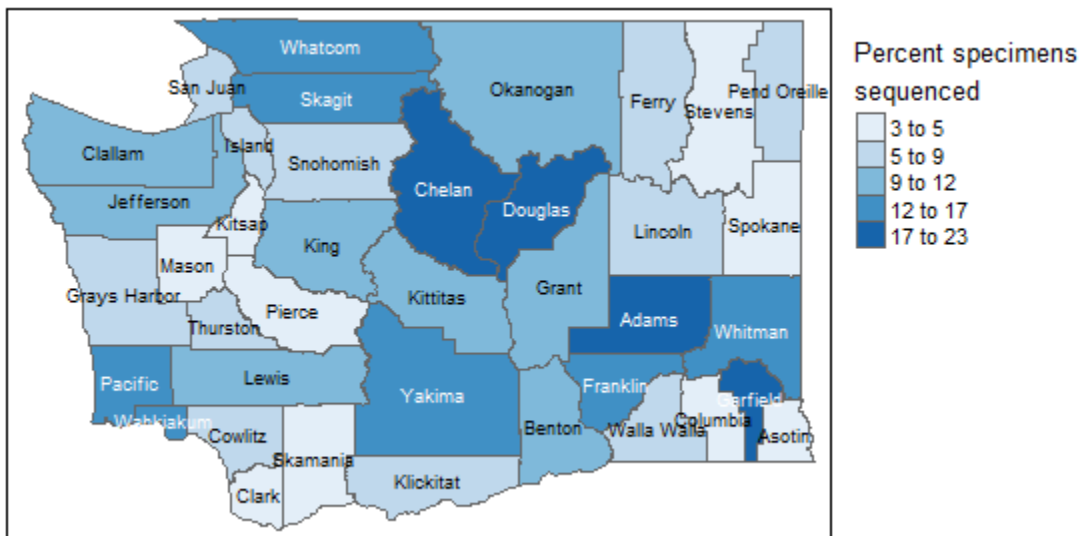
Geographic Coverage of Sequencing

Efforts are made to sequence specimens from all geographic areas of Washington State. The number of sequences and the percent of cases sequenced vary based on several factors including which laboratories conduct the majority of testing in each locality.

The map below shows the number of specimens sequenced by county of home address since January 1, 2021.



The map below shows the percent of COVID-19 cases with at least one specimen sequenced by county of home address since January 1, 2021.



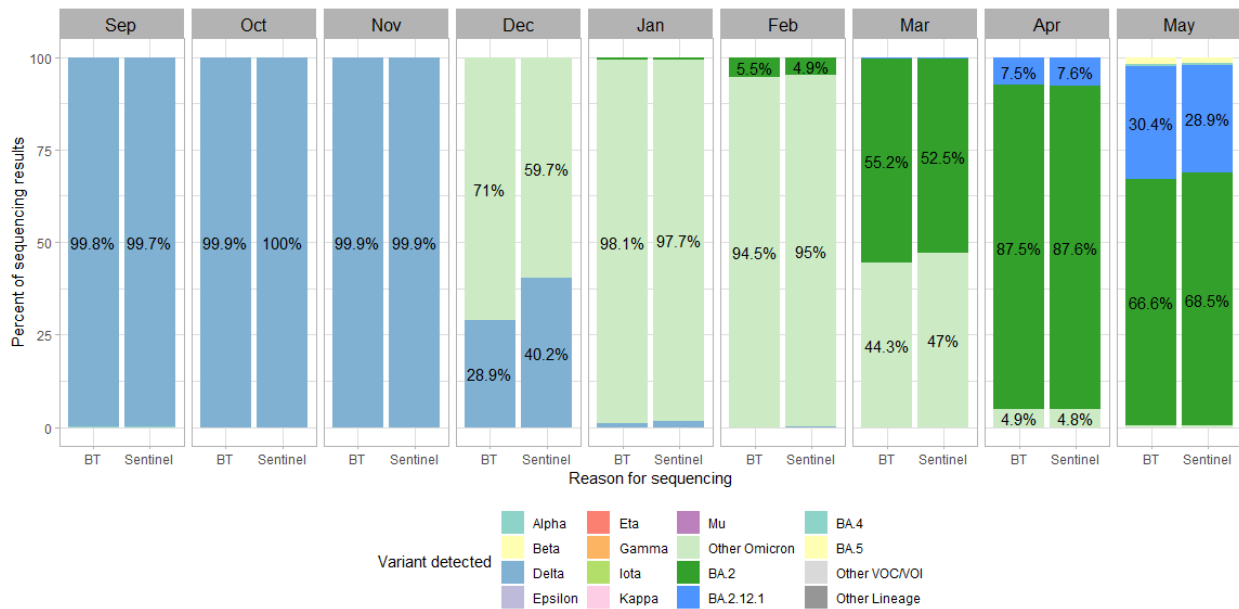
Vaccine Breakthrough Cases

A complete report on vaccine breakthrough cases can be found in the reports section of the [DOH data dashboard](#).

A vaccine breakthrough case is defined as someone who tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 at least 14 days after their final dose of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. DOH is monitoring sequencing results for vaccine breakthrough cases. This can help scientists determine whether any specific variants of the virus are causing more breakthrough cases than expected.

The table and chart below show vaccine breakthrough cases based on lineages. Lineages not designated as VOC, VOI or VBM are marked as 'other'.

Proportion of variants identified among vaccine breakthrough cases (Breakthrough) with sequencing results compared to variants identified among randomly selected COVID-19 cases (Sentinel) during the same time frame



Breakthrough cases by variant table

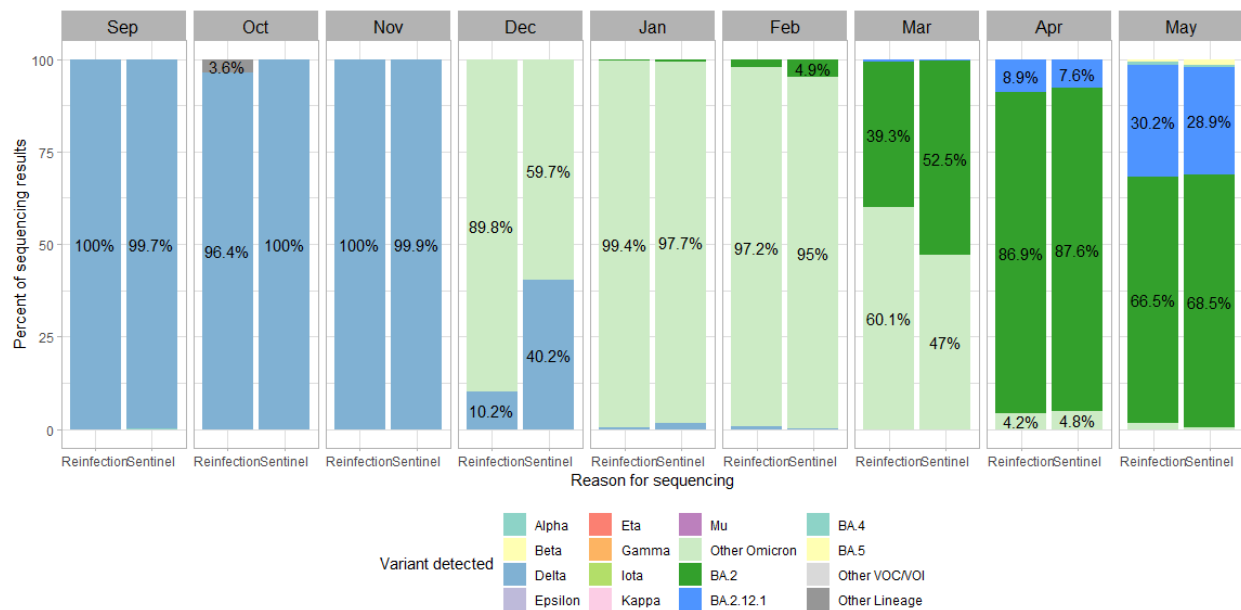
Variant	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Alpha	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delta	2,045	2,251	1,678	1,334	56	0	0	0	0
Gamma	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other Omicron	0	0	1	3,271	5,388	3,128	1,281	214	17
BA.2	0	0	0	0	42	181	1,594	3,833	2,583
BA.2.12.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	328	1,178
BA.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	27
BA.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	66
Other VOC/VOI	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5
Other Lineage	0	2	1	2	4	1	5	0	0

Reinfection

A complete report on reinfection cases can be found in the reports section of the DOH data dashboard.

In general, reinfection means a person was infected once with the virus that causes COVID-19, recovered, and then later became infected again. We are still learning about COVID-19 and the duration and strength of immunity following infection with this virus. Based on what we know from similar respiratory viruses, we expect some COVID-19 reinfections to occur. For disease surveillance purposes, a person with a reported reinfection is an individual with two positive COVID-19 test results (molecular or antigen) reported to DOH where the tests were performed at least 90 days apart. In addition, if genetic sequencing of respiratory samples from a patient's first (or primary) infection and most recent infection identifies different variants, they are considered a confirmed reinfection regardless of the amount of time between positive tests. Washington State Department of Health adopted this definition on September 1, 2021.

DOH is monitoring sequencing results for reinfection cases. This can help scientists determine whether any specific variants of the virus are causing more reinfection cases than expected. The table and chart below show reinfection cases based on lineages. Lineages not designated as VOC, VOI or VBM are marked as 'other'. Proportion of variants identified among reinfection cases (Reinfection) with sequencing results compared to variants identified among randomly selected COVID-19 cases (Sentinel) during the same time frame.



Reinfection cases by variant table

Please note - data for the most recent month are incomplete

Variant	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Delta	32	54	47	28	2	2	0	0	0
Other Omicron	0	0	0	247	634	311	101	9	4
BA.2	0	0	0	0	1	7	66	186	161
BA.2.12.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	19	73
BA.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
BA.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other Lineage	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

The hospitalization table below includes data since January 1, 2021 and does not account for factors that can influence hospitalization rates such as age and vaccination status, which may be different across variants. This means that hospitalization rates are not necessarily comparable between variants.

Hospitalizations and deaths by variant

Variant	Cases who were hospitalized	Cases who died from COVID-19	Total cases
Other Omicron	1.3%	0.5%	22,877
BA.2	0.9%	0.1%	11,681
BA.2.12.1	0.9%	0.2%	2,253
BA.4	2.3%	0%	44
BA.5	0%	0%	91
Alpha	3.4%	0.6%	10,297
Beta	7.1%	1.1%	281
Delta	4.3%	1.3%	38,678
Epsilon	2.6%	0.7%	4,141
Gamma	6.9%	1.8%	2,480
Iota	3.2%	1.3%	931
Mu	3.2%	2.1%	190
Other	2.5%	0.7%	4,820

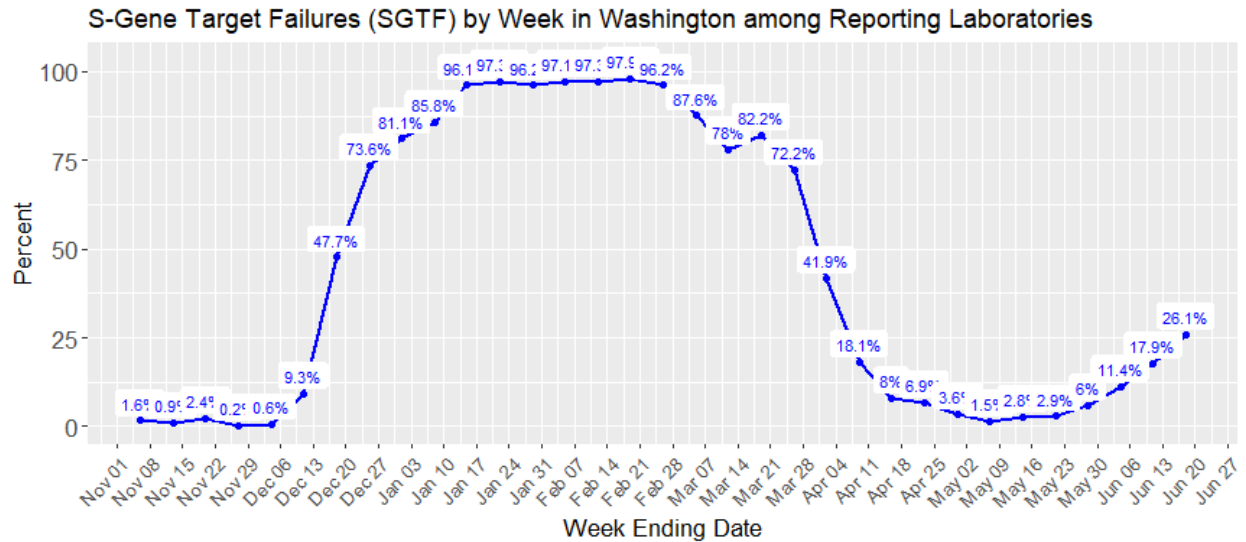
Age distribution by variant

Variant	Age 0-19	Age 20-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65-79	Age 80+	Unknown	Total cases
Other Omicron	24%	32%	22%	13%	6%	2%	2%	22,877
BA.2	19%	32%	22%	14%	7%	2%	2%	11,681
BA.2.12.1	17%	31%	23%	14%	9%	4%	2%	2,253
BA.4	27%	32%	16%	18%	7%	0%	0%	44
BA.5	19%	24%	29%	18%	7%	2%	2%	91
Alpha	27%	32%	22%	12%	3%	1%	2%	10,297
Beta	29%	34%	21%	12%	3%	0%	1%	281
Delta	23%	29%	22%	14%	7%	2%	2%	38,678
Epsilon	25%	31%	22%	14%	4%	1%	2%	4,141
Gamma	22%	35%	23%	11%	4%	3%	2%	2,480
Iota	25%	33%	24%	12%	4%	1%	1%	931
Mu	23%	36%	19%	12%	6%	1%	2%	190
Other	24%	29%	23%	15%	5%	2%	2%	4,820

*Other includes all viruses that are not categorized as VOC or VBM

Tracking Omicron Using Clinical Tests

WA DOH is tracking the Omicron variant using sequencing. One challenge is that the sequencing process can take up to a few weeks, so we use another testing marker known as 'S gene target failure (SGTF)' to identify possible Omicron cases carrying this mutation rapidly and inform public health action. BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 do not carry this mutation. While SGTF does not always mean that a case will be finalized as Omicron, greater than 95% of these results are predicted to finalize as Omicron. Many laboratories are sharing this data with WA DOH to help track the spread of Omicron.



A small number of other SARS-CoV-2 viruses other than Omicron can cause SGTF, these can be seen in the small numbers (0-3) seen weekly prior to the week of November 28th. Additionally, the Omicron sub-lineage BA.2 and BA.2.12.1 do not carry this mutation.

First Day of Week	Last Day of Week	Total Positives	Total SGTF	Percent SGTF
2021-10-31	2021-11-06	797	13	1.6%
2021-11-07	2021-11-13	754	7	0.9%
2021-11-14	2021-11-20	864	21	2.4%
2021-11-21	2021-11-27	1,119	2	0.2%
2021-11-28	2021-12-04	2,174	12	0.6%
2021-12-05	2021-12-11	2,127	198	9.3%
2021-12-12	2021-12-18	2,826	1,349	47.7%
2021-12-19	2021-12-25	3,869	2,846	73.6%
2021-12-26	2022-01-01	5,361	4,348	81.1%
2022-01-02	2022-01-08	13,320	11,432	85.8%
2022-01-09	2022-01-15	13,318	12,804	96.1%
2022-01-16	2022-01-22	10,639	10,352	97.3%
2022-01-23	2022-01-29	5,714	5,496	96.2%
2022-01-30	2022-02-05	3,116	3,027	97.1%
2022-02-06	2022-02-12	1,859	1,809	97.3%
2022-02-13	2022-02-19	975	955	97.9%
2022-02-20	2022-02-26	469	451	96.2%
2022-02-27	2022-03-05	363	318	87.6%
2022-03-06	2022-03-12	236	184	78%
2022-03-13	2022-03-19	253	208	82.2%
2022-03-20	2022-03-26	270	195	72.2%
2022-03-27	2022-04-02	210	88	41.9%
2022-04-03	2022-04-09	254	46	18.1%
2022-04-10	2022-04-16	327	26	8%
2022-04-17	2022-04-23	464	32	6.9%
2022-04-24	2022-04-30	740	27	3.6%
2022-05-01	2022-05-07	748	11	1.5%
2022-05-08	2022-05-14	867	24	2.8%
2022-05-15	2022-05-21	920	27	2.9%
2022-05-22	2022-05-28	945	57	6%

First Day of Week	Last Day of Week	Total Positives	Total SGTF	Percent SGTF
2022-05-29	2022-06-04	737	84	11.4%
2022-06-05	2022-06-11	816	146	17.9%
2022-06-12	2022-06-18	499	130	26.1%

We thank the reporting laboratories: University of Washington Virology, Northwest Laboratories, The Vancouver Clinic, Atlas Laboratories, Evergreen Health, FidaLab

We gratefully acknowledge the GISAID initiative, original laboratories responsible for obtaining the specimens, as well as the submitting laboratories where the genome data were generated and shared via GISAID.

The following clinical laboratories have contributed specimens for sequencing:

Aegis Sciences Corporation
Allenmore Hospital Laboratory
Altius Institute for Biomedical Sciences
Atlas Genomics
BioReference Laboratories Inc.
Cascade Valley Hospital
Central Washington Hospital
Columbia Basin Hospital
Curative Labs Inc.
Dayton General Hospital
Deaconess Hospital
Diatherix Laboratories
Dynacare Northwest Inc.
East Adams Rural Hospital
Everett Clinic Microbiology
Evergreen Healthcare
Ferry County Hospital
FidaLab
Forks Community Hospital
Fulgent Genetics
Gravity Diagnostics, LLC
Harborview Medical Center
Healthquest Esoterics
Helix/Illumina
Incyte Diagnostics Spokane
Infinity Biologix
Interpath Laboratory
Jefferson Healthcare

Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute
Labcorp
Laboratories Northwest
Laboratory Corporation of America
Legacy Laboratory
Magnolia Diagnostics, LLC
Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center
Mason General Hospital Laboratory
Mid Valley Hospital
Molecular Testing Labs
MultiCare
Northwest Laboratories
Northwest Laboratories
OHSU Lab Services Molecular Microbiology Lab
Olympic Medical Center
Overlake Hospital
PeaceHealth
Polyclinic
Premier Medical Laboratory
Providence Medical Group
Public Health Seattle-King County Laboratory
Quest Diagnostics Incorporated
Samaritan Hospital Lab
Seattle & King County Public Health Lab
Seattle Children's Hospital
Seattle Flu Study
Skagit Valley Hospital Laboratory
St. Francis Hospital

St. Joseph Medical Center Microbiology

St. Michael Medical Center Laboratory

Swedish Medical Center

Tacoma General Hospital

The Vancouver Clinic

Tomorrow's Health, LLC

TridentCare Laboratory

TridentCare Laboratory

University of Washington Virology Lab

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Microbiology

Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories

The following labs have reported sequencing data that is included in this report:

Aegis Laboratory
Altius Institute for Biomedical Research
Atlas Genomics
Boise VA Medical Center
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Curative
Flow Diagnostics
Fulgent Genetics
Ginkgo Bioworks Clinical Laboratory
Gravity Diagnostics, LLC
Gritman Medical Center
Grubaugh Lab
Helix Laboratories
Idaho Bureau of Laboratories
Infinity Biologix
Institute for Systems Biology
Kaiser Permanente
Laboratory Corporation of America
Montana Public Health Laboratory
Naval Health Research Center
Oregon SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequencing Center
Oregon State Public Health Laboratory
Providence St. Joseph Health Molecular Genomics Laboratory
Quest Diagnostics
Seattle Flu Study
The Jackson Laboratory
The Luring Laboratory
United States Arm Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases

University of Washington Virology Lab

Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories
