

# MORE TRANSMISSIBLE THAN OMICRON: ALL YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT NEW COVID VARIANT XE

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Right when the world thought it was enough of Covid and it's time to move on, the deadly virus may have something else in store for humans. As per the WHO (World Health Organisation), a Covid variant of mutation called XE has been found in the UK, which the global health body suggests could be more transmissible than any other Covid strain so far.

The new revelations comes amid a spurt in [COVID-19 cases](#) in the UK, which has again reached record levels, with about 1 in 13 people estimated to be infected with the virus in the past week, Britain's official statistics shows. So what do we know about this new Covid variant and how infectious is it? Let's talk about it in details.

## What is XE variant?

XE is combination or recombinant of both sub-variants (BA.1 and BA.2) of Omicron. The recombinant variant appears to be, as per the WHO, 10 per cent more transmissible than the BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron. "Early-day estimates indicate a community growth rate advantage of 10 percent as compared to BA.2, however, this finding requires further confirmation," says the WHO.

A UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) study recently revealed that currently as many as 3 hybrid COVID variants are circulating. The two different combinations of Delta and BA.1 are XD and XF. The third is XE.

## WHO's warning on XE:-

The WHO on April 1 issued a report on its findings about XE. "The XE recombinant was first detected in the United Kingdom on 19 January and >600 sequences have been reported and confirmed since," the WHO research shows. Earlier, the UN health agency had issued warnings against Omicron, Delta recombinant virus, saying with both Omicron and Delta circulating in a massive scale, this was highly expected.

## Should you worry?

As per eminent virologist Tom Peacock, recombinants that contain the spike and structural proteins from a single virus (like XE or XF) are fairly likely to act similarly to their parental virus.

Experts say XD is maybe a little more concerning than XE. It has been found in Germany, Netherlands and Denmark. It contains the structural proteins from Delta - if any of these recombinants were to act much differently than its parent it might be XD.

## BA.2 becoming prevalent:-

BA.2 sub-variant of omicron is fast replacing Omicron BA.1, especially in countries like the US and the UK. Both these nations scores best in terms of inoculating their populations.

Apart from these two nations, China is also reporting a surge in Covid cases; in March alone, the country saw 1.04 lakh Covid cases, a majority of them were found to be in Shanghai and Jilin

regions.

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