

The Mu Variant Is Here

By

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As a practicing primary care physician, I get asked many times a day what is the Mu Variant of the COVID19 virus, should we be worried about it, is it in Southern California yet, will my vaccinations work to protect me and my family, how does it compare to the original Alpha strain and the current Delta strain, will cloth masks protect or is the N95 mask or face shields needed, etc.?

The original alpha Covid19 (SARS2) strain pandemic started in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 infecting ~225million and killing ~4.6 million people in 221 countries so far worldwide. Every few months, it mutates new variants labeled by the Greek alphabet. Mu is the new variant which was first found in Columbia, South America then Great Britain, and now North America. Although it is less infectious than the current Delta variant, the current mRNA vaccines like Pfizer and Moderna have a 95% efficacy against the Delta strain but not for the Mu strain. A new vaccine will need to be developed in the near future. The symptoms are similar to all the strains including but not limited to headache, sore throat, fever, body and muscle aches, shortness of breath, cough, pneumonia, clots, inflammation of blood vessels and heart, and even death. The loss of sense of smell and taste is not as common to the Delta strain as to the other strains. Antivirals like remdesivir and monoclonal antibody infusions appear to treat all the strains if started best within 2 days of onset of symptoms and 10 days maximum at the outset. Symptomatic treatment with Dexamethasone steroid as an ant-inflammatory, blood thinners to prevent/treat clots, inhalers for the shortness of breath, Tylenol/Advil/Aleve for the pain and fever, vitamin D3, C, and Zinc for prevention of the inflammatory response, plus self-quarantine for 10 days from onset of symptoms. The natural immune response lasts ~90 days where as the vaccines appear to last 8-12 months so booster shots are recommended annually at 8 months after the anniversary of the second vaccine shot. So far, the FDA has approved the Pfizer vaccine booster with the other approvals are pending in the near future.

Your family physician would be best to advise you.