

Some COVID-19 cases are mild, but this “is not the common cold,” cautions AdventHealth epidemiologist

Hospitalizations continue to increase as Omicron variant spreads

ORLANDO, Fla., Jan. 5, 2022 – About 630 people are hospitalized with COVID-19 throughout AdventHealth’s Central Florida hospitals, an increase that underscores the continued severity of the virus in many people in the community, said Dr. Vincent Hsu, executive director of infection prevention for the health care system, at Wednesday’s [AdventHealth News Briefing](#).

While the Omicron variant causes more mild illness in some, serious symptoms such as respiratory distress are still common among hospitalized patients.

“It is not the common cold,” Hsu said. “You don’t see people hospitalized and on ventilators with the common cold.”

Hsu said the vaccines, especially combined with booster shots, are still proving effective in preventing severe cases of COVID-19. About 70% of COVID-19 patients in AdventHealth’s Intensive Care Units are unvaccinated.

People should avoid going to the Emergency Room just for a COVID-19 test, he said, and instead seek a home test, a county-run testing site or an appointment at AdventHealth Centra Care.

He noted that Omicron is unlikely to be the final surge of the pandemic. With abundant evidence that the virus continues to mutate and reinfect people who have been previously infected, it appears likely new variants will continue to present challenges.

But vaccines will continue to play a large role in keep disruptions to daily lives to a minimum.

“If you have to choose between repeated infections or the vaccine, it would make much more sense to get the vaccine and avoid that illness,” Hsu said.

We encourage you to refer to the video by downloading it [here](#).