



REUTERS

# Omicron severity question answered in 3-4 weeks, WHO official says



Interview with WHO Europe regional head Kluge in Brussels

**Philip Blenkinsop**

Wed, December 22, 2021, 8:22 AM

By Philip Blenkinsop

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Omicron will become the dominant coronavirus variant in Europe by the start of 2022 and three to four weeks is needed to determine the severity of the COVID-19 it causes, the

**Many Californians will likely get infected during Omicron surge. How bad will it get?**

LA Times



5

Mail

Hans Kluge has warned countries to brace for a "significant surge" in cases.

**Cheesecake - 2 IDs - \$43.84**

Andyanand Ad



He told Reuters in an interview on Wednesday that Omicron, already dominant in Britain, Denmark and Portugal, was likely to be the main coronavirus strain in Europe "in a couple of weeks".



"There is no doubt that Europe is once again the epicentre of the global pandemic," said Kluge, the WHO Regional Director for Europe, adding that infections were up 40% from a year ago and Omicron was now taking over.

"Yes, I'm very concerned, but there is no reason for panic," he said. "The good news is... we know what to do."

People needed to adopt a "vaccine-plus" approach, with vaccinations and booster shots complemented by mask-wearing, while ruling out "non-essential" contacts over Christmas and New Year, he said.

Countries should also be ready to implement stricter measures, but lockdowns should only be used as a last resort, given the economic and social cost.

Kluge said it was not clear how long immunity lasted after a third dose. Israel is set to become the first country to offer fourth vaccine doses to more vulnerable people.

"But then let's remember that Israel was the first one to start. So I would say that a fourth dose in Israel is like a third dose in other countries," he said.

#### LESS SEVERE COVID?

Some studies suggest Omicron causes less severe disease than the Delta variant that is dominant in most countries, but scientists are still debating this point.

Kluge said it would likely be three to four weeks before the question was answered.

#### Tour NFL Star Ryan Kalil's Modernist Family Home in California

Architectural Digest

#### Not much for certain playoffs wise as NFL enters Week 16

Associated Press

#### Kyle Shanahan displeased with 49ers' miscues, explains what happened

NBC Sports BayArea

#### Skip the Doctor - Upgrade to AirCurve10 Auto Today

Easy Breathe CPAP Store Ad

#### Titans rally to win over 49ers that puts Cowboys into NFL playoffs

AFP



5

Mail

Cancer and cardio-vascular diseases.



Controlling the virus would come through vaccines, boosters, doubling the number of people wearing masks indoors, ventilation and use of new COVID-19 drugs.

Kluge said the good news from history was that every pandemic had ended.

"This virus has surprised us more than once so I would say I don't know when it will finish, but I think that we are on track that our lives will normalise next year, particularly if - we don't know - if Omicron would be less severe," he said.

"The key issue is how do we survive the winter, how do we leave no one behind."

(Reporting by Philip Blenkinsop; Editing by Frank Jack Daniel)

**A model says she was uninvited from her friend's wedding after looking 'too good' in the bridesmaid dress the bride chose for her**

INSIDER

**Warming relations between Russia and China pose challenge for Biden**

Yahoo News

**Before You Renew Amazon Prime, Read This**

CapitalOne Shopping Ad



Our goal is to create a safe and engaging place for users to connect over interests and passions. In order to improve our community experience, we are temporarily suspending article commenting.

**Woman who urged boyfriend to kill himself pleads guilty**

Yahoo News Video

**Clearing skies for Christmas Eve**

WMTW - Portland ME



5

Mail

