

## Dept of Health monitoring hospitalisations and deaths linked to new Covid-19 variant

A new Covid variant has been discovered in the country, the Health Department has confirmed.



Source: [Flxabay](#)

The variant - XBB.1.5 has been dubbed 'Kraken' because of its high transmissibility recorded already in 28 countries.

"We are talking about omicron - it's still Omicron, it's just added two different mutations that makes it slightly more transmissible," said head of the KwaZulu-Natal Research Innovation and Sequencing Platform (Krisp), Tulio de Oliveira.

De Oliveira said "it's not any kind of virus that will cause havoc in the world" and that South Africa should not panic since we have achieved a high population immunity.

“ Covid-19 ‘mutation’: Call for people to vaccinate and get boosters in SA, NDoH and scientists support a boosting program to avoid serious cases. <https://t.co/Vx24FcWOWQ>— Tulio de Oliveira (@Tuliodna) [January 9, 2023](#) ”

The Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness has said its surveillance and monitoring of Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths from a number of Covid-19 variants is ongoing.

Minister Mbombo urged the public to get vaccinated and receive their booster shots if they qualify.

"Vaccination remains our best defence against infection," he cautioned.

The National Department of Health has indicated it will provide more information on the detection of the XBB.1.5 variant in due course.

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