

# Woman tired of couple's constant, intrusive drama



**DEAR ABBY**  
ADVICE

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband has a "best friend" from childhood I'll call "Artie," but they have little in common anymore. Finding things to do with him and his wife is a struggle. We like to travel, so we always invite them along, but Artie says "no" to everything. His wife, "Ann," and I are pretty close.

The problem? We all spend a lot of time together (at our home) and they fight constantly! It doesn't matter where they are,

Ann shows up at our house in the middle of the night needing a place to sleep. Their fighting has ruined more gatherings than I have fingers and toes to count. I feel like our life is consumed by their toxic relationship. My husband tells me I should just "ignore it." But he's not the one who has to tend to his friend's wife EVERY day. I don't know what to do. — **EXHAUSTED IN ALABAMA**

**DEAR EXHAUSTED:** What you do is draw the line. Tell your husband the unrelenting warfare in his friend's marriage is more than you care to handle. Tell Ann the same thing, and that if she can't sleep under her own roof,

she'll have to find other accommodations than your house in the middle of the night. Urge her to get counseling and to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233) or a local domestic violence shelter if Artie is violent. As to socializing with them as a couple — on trips, yet (!) — explain to your husband that you have lost your appetite for it, and if he wants to see his childhood friend, he should do it without you.

**DEAR ABBY:** I've been married for six years. When I met my wife, we decided she'd move into my home with her teenage boys. I told them upfront how important it is to me to keep a

clean home. When they come home from college, they leave a mess in the kitchen, and it drives me crazy. This has been going on since we married, and I'm ready to tell my wife they are not allowed back into my home.

I have reminded them many times about cleaning up after themselves, but their mess continues. I'm close to losing my temper over it. It angers me to see grown men in my home do this. It feels like they are blatantly disrespecting me. When I was away for a year, my wife constantly complained to me about their lack of cleanliness as well. Am I in the wrong? — **TASKMASTER IN**

**CALIFORNIA**  
**DEAR TASKMASTER:** You are not wrong. Remind the "boys" — without exploding — that you have asked them repeatedly not to leave the kitchen in a mess after they use it. Then tell them — without exploding — that if it happens again, they will have to arrange for other accommodations when they visit.

It goes without saying that your wife should back you up on this. They should also ask their mother if there is anything else they can do to be helpful when they visit — like wash the towels they have used and make up the beds with fresh linens before they return to school.

# US tracking of virus variants has improved after slow start

The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — After a slow start, the United States has improved its surveillance system for tracking new coronavirus variants such as omicron, boosting its capacity by tens of thousands of samples per week since early this year.

Viruses mutate constantly. To find and track new versions of the coronavirus, scientists analyze the genetic makeup of a portion of samples that test positive.

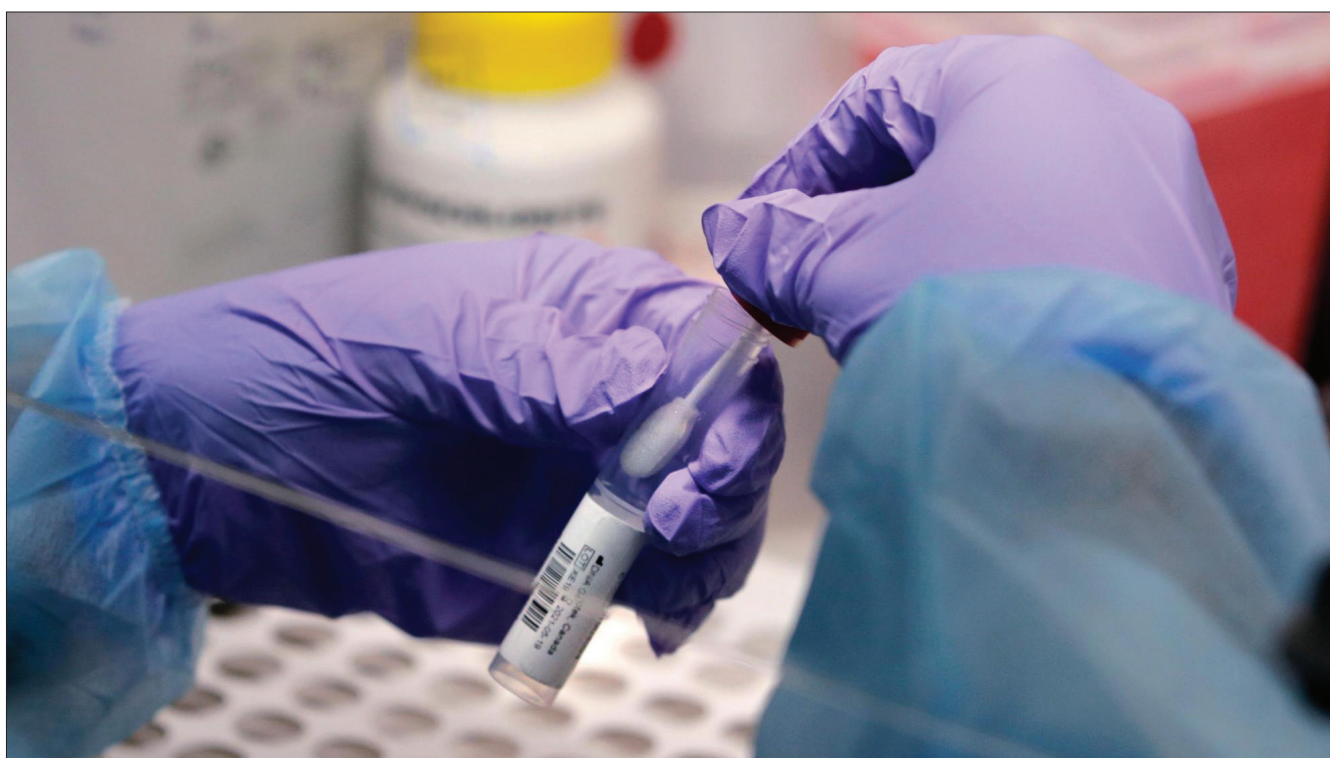
They're looking at the chemical letters of the virus's genetic code to find new worrisome mutants, such as omicron, and to follow the spread of known variants, such as delta.

It's a global effort, but until recently the U.S. was contributing very little.

With uncoordinated and scattershot testing, the U.S. was sequencing fewer than 1% of positive specimens earlier this year. Now, it is running those tests on 5% to 10% of samples. That's more in line with what other nations have sequenced and shared with global disease trackers over the course of the pandemic.

"Genomic surveillance is strong," said Kelly Wroblewski, director of infectious diseases at the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

Contributing to the effort are nearly 70 state and local public health labs, which are sequencing 15,000 to 20,000 specimens each week. Other labs, including those run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its contractors, bring the total to 40,000 to 80,000 weekly.



James Robson, a biomedical engineering graduate student, holds a swab and specimen vial in the new COVID-19, on-campus testing lab, Thursday, July 23, 2020, at Boston University in Boston. The United States has improved its surveillance system for tracking new coronavirus variants such as omicron, boosting its capacity by tens of thousands of samples since early 2021.

Nine months ago, about 12,000 samples each week were being analyzed in this way.

"We're in a much, much better place than a year ago or even six or nine months ago," said Kenny Beckman of the University of Minnesota, who credited federal dollars distributed to public and private labs. He directs the university's genomics laboratory, which now sequences about 1,000 samples a week from states including Minnesota, Arkansas and South Dakota. A year ago, the lab did no sequencing.

Relying on \$1.7 billion in President Joe Biden's coronavirus relief bill, the U.S. has been setting up a national network to

better track coronavirus mutations.

Still, about two dozen countries are sequencing a larger proportion of positive samples than the U.S., said Dr. William Moss of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Omicron's emergence could "stimulate the United States to do this better."

"I think we still have a long way to go," Moss said.

Some states are sequencing only about 1% of samples while others are in the range of 20%, noted Dr. Phil Febbo, chief medical officer for Illumina, a San Diego-based company that develops genomic sequencing technologies.

"We could be more systematic about it and more

consistent so we ensure there are no genomic surveillance deserts where we could miss the emergence of a variant," Febbo said.

Aiding the surveillance effort, standard PCR tests that use nasal swabs sent to laboratories can detect a sign that someone probably has the omicron variant. If a PCR test is positive for only two of the three target genes — a so-called S-dropout test result — it's a marker for omicron even before the extra step of genetic sequencing to prove it.

"It's fortuitous," said Trevor Bedford, a biologist and genetics expert at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. "If you need to do sequencing to identify the variant you're

always going to be lagged a bit and it's going to be more expensive. If you just rely on this S-dropout as identification then it's easier."

He said other variants also have sparked this quirk in PCR test results, but not the delta variant. With delta so dominant in the U.S. right now, an S-dropout result will get noticed, Bedford said. (Bedford receives funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports the Association of Public Health and Science Department.)

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said it is "inevitable" that omicron will make its way into the United States.

Many experts said it's

probably already here and will be picked up by the surveillance system soon. But the question is, then what?

University of Wisconsin AIDS researcher David O'Connor noted: "We don't have the sorts of interstate travel restrictions that would make it possible to contain the virus in any one place."

Instead, genomic surveillance will tell officials if omicron is spreading unusually fast somewhere and whether more resources should be sent to those places, he said.

When omicron does surface, public health authorities will have to consider other variables in their triage efforts, such as the level of infection already present in that community and the vaccination rate. Serious outbreaks in highly vaccinated areas would be particularly concerning.

Still, the University of Minnesota's Beckman sees little upside in vastly ramping up sequencing.

"You don't need to sequence more than a few percent of positive cases to get a feel for how quickly it's growing," he said.

Unlike in some other countries, U.S. government officials haven't exercised the authority to force people to quarantine if they test positive for worrisome variants. Given that, sequencing is mainly a surveillance tool for tracking mutations' spread.

"I think it's important to track variants, but I don't think it's practical to think that we're going to be able to sequence quickly and broadly enough to stop a variant in its tracks," Beckman said.

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# weather

	TONIGHT	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
	Low clouds	Times of clouds and sun	Brightening, mild	Increasing cloudiness	Cloudy with rain possible
<b>Baker City</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>49 29</b>	<b>47 26</b>	<b>44 28</b>	<b>40 27</b>
Comfort Index™	7	5	5	4	3
<b>La Grande</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>51 40</b>	<b>52 38</b>	<b>50 38</b>	<b>48 35</b>
Comfort Index™	7	5	5	5	3
<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48 37</b>	<b>52 37</b>	<b>45 38</b>	<b>44 36</b>
Comfort Index™	7	7	6	5	5

Comfort Index takes into account how the weather will feel based on a combination of factors. A rating of 10 feels very comfortable while a rating of 0 feels very uncomfortable.

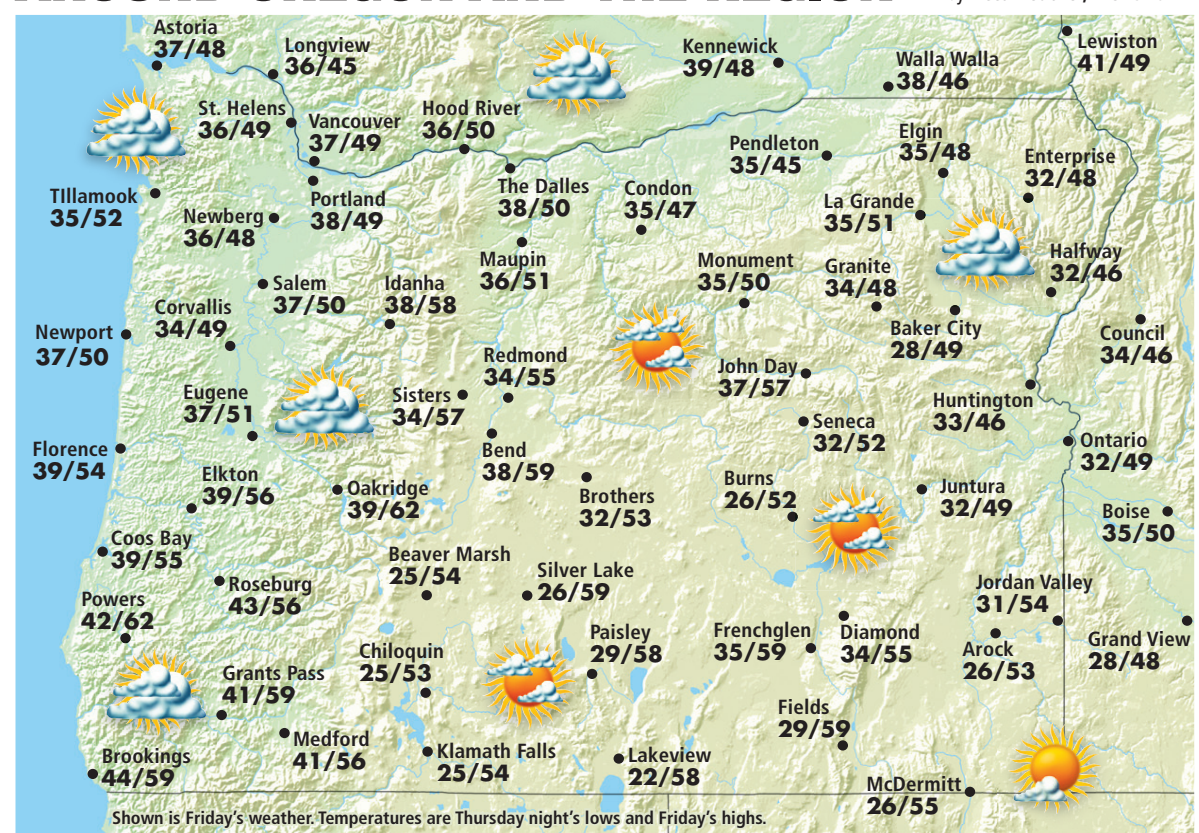
ALMANAC			
<b>TEMPERATURES</b>	<b>Baker City</b>	<b>La Grande</b>	<b>Elgin</b>
High Tuesday	42°	51°	49°
Low Tuesday	21°	29°	33°
<b>PRECIPITATION</b> (inches)			
Tuesday	0.00	Trace	0.12
Month to date	0.66	1.58	3.53
Normal month to date	0.73	1.94	3.15
Year to date	5.01	9.98	22.04
Normal year to date	8.21	15.52	22.18

AGRICULTURAL INFO.	
<b>HAY INFORMATION FRIDAY</b>	
Lowest relative humidity	55%
Afternoon wind	S at 6 to 12 mph
Hours of sunshine	1.9
Evapotranspiration	0.04
<b>RESERVOIR STORAGE</b> (through midnight Wednesday)	
Phillips Reservoir	N.A.
Unity Reservoir	15% of capacity
Owyhee Reservoir	14% of capacity
McKay Reservoir	11% of capacity
Wallowa Lake	10% of capacity
Thief Valley Reservoir	7% of capacity
<b>STREAM FLOWS</b> (through midnight Tuesday)	
Grande Ronde at Troy	1000 cfs
Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder	0 cfs
Burnt River near Unity	16 cfs
Umatilla River near Gibbon	108 cfs
Minam River at Minam	141 cfs
Powder River near Richland	8 cfs

TUESDAY EXTREMES			
<b>NATION</b> (for the 48 contiguous states)			
High: 91°	Palm Springs, Calif.		
Low: 6°	Angel Fire, N.M.		
Wettest: 2.84"	Quillayute, Wash.		
<b>OREGON</b>			
High: 68°	Brookings		
Low: 18°	Lakeview		
Wettest: 0.12"	Astoria		
<b>WEATHER HISTORY</b>			
The West was wintry, and the East was balmy on Dec. 2, 1982. Buffalo, N.Y., reached 66. Heavy snow fell in the West, from the central Rockies to the Upper Midwest.			
<b>SUN &amp; MOON</b>			
	<b>THU.</b>	<b>FRI.</b>	
Sunrise	7:13 a.m.	7:14 a.m.	
Sunset	4:11 p.m.	4:10 p.m.	
Moonrise	5:03 p.m.	6:27 a.m.	
Moonset	3:08 p.m.	3:43 p.m.	
<b>MOON PHASES</b>			
New	First	Full	Last
Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 18	Dec 26

## AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION

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REGIONAL CITIES			
	<b>FRI.</b>	<b>SAT.</b>	
City	Hi/Lo/W	Hi/Lo/W	City
Astoria	48/39/c	51/40/c	Lewiston
Bend	59/44/pc	55/37/c	Longview
Boise	50/35/pc	53/32/c	Meacham
Brookings	59/45/s	57/44/pc	Medford
Burns	52/27/pc	55/23/pc	Newport
Coos Bay	55/41/pc	57/42/c	Olympia
Corvallis	49/37/pc	52/36/c	Ontario
Council	46/32/pc	46/29/c	Pasco
Elgin	48/37/pc	51/40/pc	Pendleton
Eugene	51/39/pc	53/37/c	Portland
Hermiston	46/36/pc	49/33/c	Powers
Hood River	50/33/pc	53/40/c	Redmond
Imnaha	54/45/c	54/41/c	Roseburg
John Day	57/43/pc	54/33/pc	Salem
Joseph	49/38/c	50/34/pc	Spokane
Kennewick	48/39/c	53/39/c	The Dalles
Klamath Falls	54/26/s	53/25/pc	Ukiah
Lakeview	58/23/s	56/22/c	Walla Walla
			46/38/c

RECREATION FORECAST FRIDAY			
<b>ANTHONY LAKES</b>	Clouds and sun	<b>37</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>MT. EMILY REC.</b>	Clearing	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>EAGLE CAP WILD.</b>	Inc. clouds	<b>38</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>WALLOWA LAKE</b>	Decreasing clouds	<b>49</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>THIEF VALLEY RES.</b>	Inc. clouds	<b>49</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>PHILLIPS LAKE</b>	Clouds and sun	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>BROWNLEE RES.</b>	Variable clouds	<b>51</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>EMIGRANT ST. PARK</b>	Periods of sun	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>MCKAY RESERVOIR</b>	Some sun; cooler	<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>RED BRIDGE ST. PARK</b>	Clouds and sun	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice