

# Is Arizona prepared for new strain of COVID-19?



A new strain of COVID-19 is spreading in the UK and holiday travel is causing growing concerns of international spread.



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A new strain of COVID-19 is [quickly becoming the most dominant strain in the United Kingdom](#).

Named "VUI-202012/01," this new mutation of the coronavirus is believed to be more infectious than COVID-19, but there is no evidence that's it more deadly than COVID-19.

"Some good news. One is that it doesn't look like there's any effect of these mutations on how effective the vaccine will be," said Dr. David Engelthaler, Director of Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGEN) North in Flagstaff. "One of the mutations seems to make the spike protein fit into cell receptors easier. It's kind of like a better key fitting into a lock. So that makes the virus get in faster, replicate faster and then potentially transmit faster."

"It may surprise people that we have more than one strain of coronavirus out there already that it has mutated many times before this.," said Dr. Ross Goldberg, Director of the Arizona Medical Association. "Imagine a big LEGO set and I go change some of the LEGOs in there. It may have changed some of the internal design, but the overall what it is hasn't changed."

Dr. Goldberg said that the current vaccine being distributed in the United States was tested against multiple different strains, and believes the vaccine will protect against the VUI-202012/01 strain.

Virus mutations are common, and Dr. Engelthaler said that the current strain of COVID-19 is a mutation of the original virus that started the pandemic.