

Bill Gates on Covid: ‘I don’t want to be a voice of doom and gloom,’ but ‘the worst’ could still be ahead

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Bill Gates speaks during the Global Investment Summit at the Science Museum on October 19, 2021 in London, England.

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After more than two years of Covid-19, plenty of people are lowering their guards. But the pandemic isn’t over yet — and, [Bill Gates](#) warns, the worst might still be ahead.

“We’re still at risk of this pandemic generating a variant that would be even more transmissible and even more fatal,” the billionaire Microsoft co-founder and public health advocate [told the Financial Times](#) on Sunday. “It’s not likely, I don’t want to be a voice of doom and gloom, but it’s way above a 5% risk that this pandemic, we haven’t even seen the worst of it.”

New Covid cases, powered by the BA.2 subvariant of Covid’s omicron strain, are currently growing across the U.S.: The country’s seven-day average of daily new U.S. cases is up to 54,429 as of Sunday, according to Johns Hopkins University data. That’s a 9% increase over the week prior, with cases growing in 39 states over that time frame.

But Covid-related deaths are declining, leading White House Covid czar Dr. Ashish Jha [to say last month](#) that he's "not overly concerned right now" about BA.2. Rather, its spread is more a reminder that Covid is still lurking — and as Gates notes, the virus could potentially mutate again, resulting in a strain of greater concern.

For Gates, one lesson from the Covid pandemic so far is that preemptive planning and protective measures could help the world better manage future pandemics. It's the core concept of [his upcoming book](#), "How to Prevent the Next Pandemic," set to publish later this year.

One proposal, he says, is for the World Health Organization to launch a global surveillance team, consisting of experts who can quickly spot new health threats around the world and rapidly coordinate with global governments to prevent future illnesses from growing into pandemics.

Gates, who has labeled his proposed task force the "Global Epidemic Response and Mobilization" (GERM) initiative, told the Financial Times that the idea would require significant financial investment from WHO and its member countries in order to create a global team of experts, including epidemiologists and virologists, and give them the tools they need to proactively identify and contain future outbreaks.