

2 Coronavirus Mutations Forming in Russia – Official

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Epidemiologists say the new strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus found in Russia aren't necessarily deadlier or more contagious. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russian epidemiologists have detected two mutated strains of the coronavirus within the country but said they aren't necessarily deadlier or more contagious, the head of state consumer protection watchdog Rospotrebnadzor [announced](#) Monday.

"We are seeing the formation of a Siberian version and the formation of a northwestern version" of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes coronavirus infection, Interfax quoted Rospotrebnadzor head Anna Popova as saying.

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Popova had [announced](#) last fall that a partial mutation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus had been detected in the Siberian Federal District but noted that the changes in the new strain's

structure did not make it more dangerous or contagious.

On Monday, Popova said there's no reason to fear the new variants, adding that experts are currently researching their epidemiological significance.

Popova said the Russian Academy of Sciences' medical sciences department would receive descriptions of these strains as soon as the materials "are ready for publication."

Later Monday, Rospotrebnadzor's press service [said](#) there's no evidence that the new mutations detected in Russia result in a more severe course of infection.

Russia confirmed its first cases of the British and South African variants within its borders earlier this year.

Studies have [suggested](#) that Russia's Sputnik V vaccine may be less effective against these strains.

The state-run Gamaleya research institute that developed Sputnik V has [said](#) it has the technology to "update" the jab to protect against new, more-contagious strains of the virus.

Russia has been one of the world's most-affected countries by the virus and has recorded at least 422,000 excess deaths since the start of the pandemic.

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