

COVID-19 & Underlying Medical Conditions: THE OVERLOOKED RISK

While COVID-19 cases have declined since the pandemic, the virus has not gone away and millions of people with existing medical conditions remain especially vulnerable to severe illness and complications.

How Many People Are Affected?

Over 200 million Americans have at least one chronic health condition. That's **6 in 10 adults** in the U.S. Four in 10 adults have **two or more** chronic conditions.



What Are Underlying Medical Conditions?

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease (at any stage)
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic lung disease (including cystic fibrosis)
- Dementia or other neurological conditions
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Disabilities
- Heart conditions
- Hemoglobin blood disorders
- HIV infection
- Immunocompromised condition or weakened immune system
- Mental health conditions
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Pregnancy
- Smoking (current or former)
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
- Substance use disorders (Such as alcohol, opioid, or cocaine use disorder)
- Tuberculosis (TB)

Older adults are at the highest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. And your risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases as the number of your underlying medical conditions increases.

Why It Matters

The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases if you have one or more underlying health conditions. People with these conditions face:

- ↑ **Higher risk of hospitalization**
- ↑ **Higher rate of ICU admission**
- ↑ **Greater chance of long COVID**
- ↑ **Higher death rates**

If you get infected with COVID-19, Antiviral Treatments Can Help

Antiviral medicines can help your body fight off the virus. They work by blocking the virus to keep symptoms from getting worse and to prevent more serious illness, lowering the chance of hospitalization or death from COVID-19.

They work best if you take them within five days after the first symptoms start. So, acting fast is important.

Nearly 3 out of 4 U.S. adults are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 and many may not even know they're at increased risk.

SOURCES

<https://www.cdc.gov/covid/risk-factors/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/underlying-conditions.html>

<https://nationalhealthcouncil.org/issue/covid-19/>