

Risk Factors for Severe Disease



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Older Age and Obesity as Risk Factors

- ▶ Some groups of people are more likely to have severe disease if they get infected
 - ▶ Older adults >65 years of age (increasing risk with age)
 - ▶ People who are obese
- ▶ Some young, healthy people become severely ill
 - ▶ Small proportion of infections
 - ▶ Children very unlikely to be severely ill

Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) > People Who Need Extra Precautions > People Who Are At Higher Risk > Groups at Higher Risk for Severe Illness. Accessed May 4, 2020.

Existing Medical Conditions as Risk Factors

- ▶ Other existing medical conditions:
 - ▶ Diabetes
 - ▶ Hypertension (high blood pressure)
 - ▶ Any kind of lung disease (asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder [COPD])
 - ▶ Heart disease
 - ▶ Liver disease
 - ▶ Kidney disease
 - ▶ Weakened immune system, including a weakened immune system caused by taking steroids or other medications that affect the immune system (note that a person who has HIV that is controlled with medication is not at substantially increased risk)

Risk Factors for Death

How the disease can kill

- ▶ If the lungs cannot recover, patients cannot breathe on their own
- ▶ Lack of oxygen can damage the organs in the body, causing increased risk for heart attacks, kidney failure, strokes, and clotting disorders

Important risks for death

- ▶ Risk for death depends on access to care and general health
- ▶ Death is rare among young and healthy people
- ▶ Death is more common among older adults
 - ▶ Of those 65 to 75 years old, 2% to 5% die
 - ▶ Of those 75 to 85 years old, 4% to 10% die
 - ▶ Of those >85 years old, >10% die

Source: CDC COVID-19 Response Team. (2020). Severe outcomes among patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)—United States, February 12–March 16, 2020. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(12), 343–346. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6912e2>

Treatment of COVID-19

- ▶ There is no *specific* treatment to cure COVID-19
- ▶ Treatment is to support the body's functions until the body's immune system can fight the infection
- ▶ Many patients with lung disease require mechanical ventilation (breathing machine, ventilator) to help them breathe
- ▶ People who need it will receive support to keep their lungs working so that the body can continue to get the oxygen it needs