

# What is considered an underlying health condition for severe COVID-19?

Individuals of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at [increased risk for severe illness](#) from the virus that causes COVID-19. Severe illness means that an individual may need hospitalization, intensive care, a ventilator to help them breathe, or may die from the virus. It is important to note that the underlying medical conditions listed below are not an exhaustive list and only include conditions with sufficient evidence to draw conclusions. **Individuals with any underlying medical conditions (including those NOT on the list below) should consult with their health care provider about their own personal risk factors associated with illness from COVID-19.**

[Age remains the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes.](#)

People 75 years of age and older have the [highest rate of hospitalization](#), followed by infants younger than 6 months and people ages 65-74.

- Most adults hospitalized for COVID-19 vaccine [have not received a COVID-19 vaccine](#) since July of 2023.
- More than half of pediatric [COVID-19 associated hospitalizations](#) occur in children younger than 2 years of age.
- Most hospitalized children younger than 2 years do not have any underlying medical condition.
- 89% of COVID-19 vaccine eligible children and adolescents who were hospitalized with COVID-19 had [no record of receiving](#) the most recently recommended COVID-19 vaccines.

**North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services**

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## Underlying medical conditions that put an individual at increased risk for potential severe and life-threatening outcomes from COVID-19:

- Asthma
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic lung disease
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Disabilities including down syndrome
- Heart conditions
- HIV infection
- Immunocompromised state
- Mental health conditions
- Neurologic conditions including dementia and Parkinson's disease
- Overweight and obesity
- Physical activity
- Pregnancy and recent pregnancy
- Smoking, current or former
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
- Substance use disorders
- Tuberculosis

A person with a condition that is not listed above may still be at increased risk of severe outcomes from COVID. It is important to speak with your health care provider about steps you can take to manage your health and risk. In general, the older you are, the more health conditions you have, and the more severe the conditions, the more important it is to take preventive measures against COVID-19. Everyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to speak to their health care provider about COVID-19 vaccines. Please see the [CDC website](#) for greater detail.

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