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This One Thing Makes You Twice As Likely to Die from COVID

Michael Martin 51 mins ago



COVID-19 is unpredictable. When you contract the virus, it can seem like a dice roll whether you'll have only minor symptoms or develop a serious case and need to be hospitalized. People of every age and health status have become severely ill and died from it. Although older people are more at risk for fatal COVID-19, experts say there's one condition—one that's within your control—that doubles your risk of dying of the coronavirus: Obesity. Read on—and to ensure your health and the health of others, don't miss these Sure Signs You've Already Had Coronavirus.



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The COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate the world, with the death toll quickly piling up. By now, most of us are educated on prevention measures (which include social distancing, proper hand hygiene, and regularly disinfecting surfaces) and can thoroughly identify the symptoms (fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell).

However, there is still a lot of confusion as to exactly what happens inside of our bodies once the highly infectious and potentially deadly virus enters—and how it can completely ravage the lungs to the point of death.

Eat This, Not That Health spoke to Naftali Kaminski, MD, Boehringer-Ingelheim Endowed Professor of Internal Medicine, Chief of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine Department of Medicine, Yale School of Medicine who explains exactly what happens to your lungs on coronavirus via a helpful diagram illustrated by Dr. Arnaud Marlier, Ph.D., an associate Research Scientist in Neurosurgery, Yale School of Medicine. Read on, and to ensure your health and the health of others, don't miss these Sure Signs You've Already Had Coronavirus

Those With Obesity are Twice as Likely to Die From COVID

"Being obese, which generally means having a body mass index of 30 or more, decreases lung capacity and is linked to impaired immune function. Obese people diagnosed with Covid-19 were more than twice as likely to be hospitalized, 74% more likely to need an intensive care unit and 48% more likely to die, according to a study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," per the *Washington Post*. "Research has also linked obesity to lower responses to numerous vaccines.

Meanwhile a U.K. survey found twice as many people put on weight as lost it during the initial pandemic lockdown in early 2020."



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Mighty Scoops

According to a study published last month in *PLoS One*, researchers found that COVID patients with severe obesity (meaning a BMI of 35 or more) were twice as likely to be admitted to the ICU and four times as likely to die of any cause.

It reinforces several previous studies that found obese people with COVID are more likely to be hospitalized, to need mechanical ventilation, and to die.

In an August study published in *Obesity Reviews*, scientists analyzed 75 studies and found that obesity (BMI over 30) was associated with a 48% higher risk of death, a 113% higher risk of hospitalization and 74% higher risk of admission to intensive care with COVID-19. The researchers also warned that obesity may reduce the effectiveness of COVID vaccines, because obesity has been found to lower the efficacy of other vaccines.

And obesity isn't just associated with poor outcomes from COVID-19—it seems to increase the chance you'll be infected with coronavirus in the first place. One UK study found that being overweight, obese, or severely obese increased the risk of COVID infection by 31%, 55% and 57%, respectively.

RELATED: 7 Tips You Must Follow to Avoid COVID, Say Doctors

Why Are People With Obesity at Risk?

Obesity has been shown to increase inflammation throughout the body and impair the immune system, which has been associated with a higher death rate from other diseases like influenza. Additionally, people with obesity tend to have higher rates of other health conditions associated with severe COVID.

"Though definitive reasons for poor COVID-19 outcomes in obesity remain uncertain, patients with obesity are uniquely vulnerable," said Dr. Ana Mostaghim, lead author of the *PLoS One* study. "They may have independent risk factors [type-2 diabetes, hypertension and coronary artery disease] for poor outcomes in COVID-19, conditions that are inflammatory and immune-mediated." High blood sugar and diabetes have been linked to higher morbidity and mortality with other coronaviruses like SARS and MERS.

Additionally, one aspect of the risk is pure physics: When you're obese, larger fat deposits in the chest wall, chest cavity, and abdominal cavity apply pressure to the chest, meaning that obese people have to work harder to breathe, even when they're healthy.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 42.5% of Americans over age 20 are obese, and 73.6% are overweight (defined as a BMI over 25).

RELATED: If You Feel This, You May Have Already Had COVID, Says Dr. Fauci

How to survive this pandemic

As for yourself, do everything you can to prevent getting—and spreading—COVID-19 in the first place: Wear a face mask, get tested if you think you have coronavirus, avoid crowds (and bars, and house parties), practice social distancing, only run essential errands, wash your hands regularly, disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and to get through this pandemic at your healthiest, don't miss these [35 Places You're Most Likely to Catch COVID](#).