Factors That Affect Your Risk of Getting Very Sick from COVID-19

Vaccination, past infection, or timely access to testing and treatment can help protect you from getting very sick if you get COVID-19. However, some people are more likely than others to get very sick if they get COVID-19. This includes people who are older, are immunocompromised, have certain disabilities, or have underlying health conditions. Understanding your COVID-19 risk and the risks that might affect others can help you make decisions to protect yourself and others.

Factors That Raise Your Risk of Getting Very Sick from COVID-19

Age

Older adults (especially those ages 50 years and older, with risk increasing with older age) are more likely than younger people to get very sick if they get COVID-19. This means they are more likely to need hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe, or they could die. Most COVID-19 deaths occur in people older than 65.

Immunocompromised or a Weakened Immune System

Having a weakened immune system, also known as being immunocompromised, can make you more likely to get very sick if you get COVID-19. People who are immunocompromised, or who are taking medicines that weaken their immune system, may not be protected as well as others, even if they are up to date on their vaccines. They may be eligible for Evusheld, a medicine given by a healthcare provider to help prevent COVID-19.

Underlying Health Conditions

Certain underlying health conditions you have (for example, obesity or chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder) may affect your risk of becoming very sick if you get COVID-19.

Often, the more health conditions you have, the higher your risk. Certain conditions increase your risk more than others. For example, severe heart disease increases your risk more than high blood pressure.

Factors That Can Help Protect You from Getting Very Sick from COVID-19

Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines is the best way to protect yourself and others around you from getting very sick, being hospitalized, or dying from COVID-19. Booster doses can give you additional protection. They can help enhance or restore protection that might have decreased over time.

People who are vaccinated with all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters, are far less likely to be hospitalized or die from COVID-19 than people the same age who have not been vaccinated or who are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines. However, even though

vaccines reduce their risk, some people, particularly older adults with multiple underlying health conditions or people who are immunocompromised, can still get very sick from COVID-19.