

CDC Underlying Medical Conditions – COVID-19

We are learning more about the risk factors for severe COVID-19 outcomes every day. Age is the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes. Approximately 54.1 million people aged 65 years or older reside in the United States; this age group accounts for more than 80% of U.S. COVID-19 related deaths. Residents of long-term care facilities make up less than 1% of the U.S. population but account for more than 35% of all COVID-19 deaths. Additionally, adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

The CDC has published updated information regarding underlying medical conditions and level of risk for becoming infected with the virus. The web page also outlines the following actions providers can take:

- Educate and encourage everyone, especially older people and those with underlying medical conditions, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as a vaccine becomes available to them. For additional information, including a link to your state or territorial health department's website on eligibility for and locations for COVID-19 vaccination click here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/specific-groups.html>
- Encourage patients to keep appointments for routine care and adhere to treatment regimens.
- Consider use of telehealth in coordination with community-based organizations, family members, or other providers, when appropriate, although some patients may not have knowledge of or access to appropriate technology or internet service.
- Encourage patients with underlying medical conditions to continue practicing preventive measures such as wearing a mask and physical distancing, to avoid infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. This becomes even more important with increasing age and number and severity of underlying conditions.
- Carefully consider potential additional risks of COVID-19 illness for patients who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, and how to facilitate access to culturally and linguistically appropriate resources. These patients are often younger when they develop chronic medical conditions, might be at higher risk of having more than one underlying medical condition, and at higher risk for acquisition of COVID-19. Studies have shown that people in ethnic and racial minority groups are dying from COVID-19 at younger ages.
- Based on their clinical judgment, healthcare providers might recommend that people with underlying conditions that are not included in the current recommended list, receive vaccination as soon as it becomes available.

The information obtained from the study can be found at the link below.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-care/underlyingconditions.html>

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This policy and procedure is not intended to replace the informed judgment of individual physicians, nurses or other clinicians nor is it intended as a statement of prevailing community standards or minimum standards of practice. It is a suggested method and technique for achieving optimal health care, not a minimum standard below which residents necessarily would be placed at risk.