

Asthma, COPD raise odds for severe COVID-19, lung experts warn

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(HealthDay)—People with asthma and other lung diseases are at increased risk for serious complications from COVID-19, caution experts from the American Lung Association.

"Everyone's health is at risk from COVID-19, and those living with a lung disease or who are immunocompromised may be more vulnerable to the impacts of the virus," said Dr. Albert Rizzo, the association's chief medical officer.

COVID-19 can cause a pneumonia-like lung infection, with a range of symptoms from mild or absent in some to life-threatening in others, he said.

It's crucial for people with chronic lung diseases such as asthma or [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#) (COPD) to keep taking their maintenance medications and tell their health care provider about any symptoms or changes in their health, Rizzo said.

All lung disease patients—including those with lung cancer who may have a weakened immune system—need to take steps avoid contact with the coronavirus.

Besides social distancing, measures include thorough hand-washing; not touching face, nose, mouth and eyes; and avoiding contact with people who may have been infected.

"The healthcare system and hospitals are already stressed with admissions as a result of the pandemic," Rizzo said. "It's important for those with [lung disease](#) to use their best practices in managing their disease."

People who smoke or vape are also at increased risk of serious COVID-19 complications.

"Cigarette smoking and vaping are linked to lung inflammation and lowered immune function in the lung's airways, both of which can increase likelihood of complications if exposed to COVID-19," he said. "Therefore, long-term smokers and e-cigarette users may have a higher risk of developing chronic lung conditions associated with severe cases."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on those who are at [high risk for complications from COVID-19](#).

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