

COVID-19: Is male pattern baldness a risk factor for more serious illness?

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Are bald men more likely to suffer severe COVID-19 symptoms? Researchers are looking into the possible link after preliminary observations of high frequency of male pattern baldness among patients admitted to the hospital for COVID-19. Dr. Gregory Poland, a Mayo Clinic COVID-19 expert, says two very small studies suggest that androgens, which are male sex hormones associated with male pattern hair loss, could be the explanation.

"The interesting thing is they also found this true for older women who were experiencing more of a male pattern baldness because of elevated androgenic hormones. So, there is something to this," says Dr. Poland.

Dr. Poland says the correlation may be similar to what we've learned about COVID-19 and blood types.

"We've heard about blood group A being higher risk than [blood](#) group O. These are lots of individually small factors, including genes, environment, baseline state of health, even age, that together determine someone's risk for having severe disease if they were to get infected."

However, Dr. Poland says that not all cases of severe COVID-19 can be attributed to one of the known [risk factors](#).

"It's very unfortunate, we see young, healthy kids and young, [healthy adults](#) getting very complicated, even fatal disease. So, what we know about the risk factors we know about doesn't explain all of it," says Dr. Poland. "That's why I still tell people, you know, universal precautions are still in order here. This is a serious disease."

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