

2025: High Risk Criteria for COVID-19 Defined By Various Federal Health Agencies

Background: This document provides a comparative analysis of how high-risk criteria for severe COVID-19 illness are defined across various health agencies. While the sources referenced offer differing levels of detail, all generally align in identifying similar high-risk populations. The included table highlights these criteria, capturing the nuances and consistencies across the different authoritative statements and clinical guidelines.

Comparison of High-Risk Criteria for COVID-19 Across Health Agencies and Organizations		
Agency/Organization	High Risk Criteria	Notes
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <i>Site last updated 6/11/2025</i>	<p>Risk factors for getting very sick with COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults over the age of 65 • Increased number of underlying medical conditions • Children and teens with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Medical complexity ◦ Genetic, neurologic, or metabolic conditions ◦ Congenital heart disease • People living in certain geographic areas or with certain jobs, or those unable to receive health care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This includes many people from racial and ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities <p>Conditions that can increase risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer • Cerebrovascular disease • Chronic kidney disease (at any stage) • Chronic liver disease • Chronic lung disease <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Asthma (moderate to severe) ◦ Bronchiectasis (thickening of the lungs' airways) ◦ Bronchopulmonary dysplasia (chronic lung disease affecting newborns) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conditions on this list are in alphabetical order. They are not in order of risk. • CDC reviewed each medical condition on this list to ensure they met criteria for inclusion. If there is new evidence, other conditions might be added to the list. • This list does not include all medical conditions that place a person at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Rare medical conditions, including many conditions that mostly affect children, may not be included. • A person with a condition that is not listed may still be at greater risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 than other people. It is important to talk with your

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including emphysema and chronic bronchitis ○ Damaged or scarred lung tissue (interstitial lung disease including idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis) ○ Pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lungs) ○ Pulmonary hypertension (high blood pressure in the lungs) ● Cystic fibrosis ● Dementia or other neurological conditions ● Diabetes (type 1 or type 2) ● Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People with any type of disability that makes it more difficult to do certain activities or interact with the world around them, including people who need help with self-care or daily activities ○ People with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) ○ People with cerebral palsy ○ People with birth defects ○ People with intellectual and developmental disabilities ○ People with learning disabilities ○ People with spinal cord injuries ○ People with Down syndrome ● Heart conditions ● Hemoglobin blood disorders ● HIV infection ● Immunocompromised condition or weakened immune system, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People who have cancer and are on chemotherapy 	<p>healthcare provider about your risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The CDC website notes that “mood disorders including depression and schizophrenia spectrum disorders” qualify as a mental health condition, but does not provide additional specific mental health conditions; the additional information section links to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) general mental health landing page.
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Health and Human Services (HHS) <i>The list has not changed since 01/06/2025, based on web archives</i>	<p>You are considered high risk for a severe case of COVID-19 if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are 65 years or older ● Are pregnant ● Have certain health conditions such as obesity, asthma, diabetes, or heart disease ● Have a weakened immune system 	
<p>Food and Drug Administration <i>Content current as of 08/27/2025</i></p> <p>Pfizer Moderna Novavax</p>	<p>The FDA labels for the 2025-26 COVID-19 vaccines includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adults aged 65 years or older ● All persons aged 6 months or older with one or more risk factors that put them at high risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes, as described by the CDC 	