

Appendix 2:

Who is at most risk of severe illness from COVID-19?

These guidelines are not a hard and fast rule and will be updated as and when further evidence becomes available.

The key determinant of COVID-19 becoming a severe illness is the existence of underlying medical conditions, especially if these conditions are not well controlled. Relevant conditions include:

- Serious respiratory disease such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised conditions
- Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking related illness, bone marrow or organ transplantation, haematologic neoplasms, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications (such as disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs)
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease, people undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease.

Those over 70: Older people, particularly those who have underlying health issues including respiratory issues, are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Residents of aged care facilities: Aged care facilities are susceptible to the rapid transmission of viruses like this. Residents are more susceptible to illnesses due to their age and they are also more likely to have underlying health conditions.

Pregnant women: Health experts do not yet know if pregnant women are impacted by COVID-19 in the same way as other people. However, pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk from some infections.

Dedicated Healthline 0800 number for COVID-19 health advice and information

The number is **0800 358 5453** (or for international SIMs **+64 9 358 5453**).

It is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19-novel-coronavirus/COVID-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public#risk