COVID-19 and NCD risk factors

**OBESITY**

Obesity increases the risk for becoming severely ill from COVID-19. In a study in France, the odds of developing severe COVID-19 were seven times higher in patients with obesity. Promoting healthy diets to maintain nutritional well-being is more important than ever in the fight against COVID-19.

**SMOKING**

In a meta-analysis, smokers were 1.5 times more likely to have severe complications from COVID-19 and had a higher mortality rate.

**ALCOHOL**

Alcohol impairs the body’s ability to fight infections such as COVID-19. Even a single heavy drinking session can measurably reduce immune function. Intoxication can also interfere with taking precautions against infection.

**PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**

Physical activity provides multiple short- and long-term health benefits, including improving the immune system, stress and anxiety. Physical activity is also associated with prevention of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and overweight and obesity, which are risk factors for severe COVID-19 disease.

**POLLUTION**

A relation between exposure to air pollution and mortality from COVID-19 has been hypothesized. Air pollution compromises lung function, which increases the risk for vulnerability to respiratory infection, including COVID-19.

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5. WHO. Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world.
Cancer patients are more likely to experience severe COVID-19. A study in Wuhan, China, showed that the mortality rate from COVID-19 was significantly increased in patients with cancer and was particularly high among those with blood cancers.

**DIABETES**

A systematic review indicated that people with diabetes were up to three times more likely to have severe symptoms or die from COVID-19, and the situation is likely to be worse for people with uncontrolled diabetes.

**CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

A meta-analysis showed that hypertension, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease increased the odds for severe COVID-19 by 2.3, 2.9 and 3.9 times, respectively. Another meta-analysis indicated that hypertension increased the risk of mortality from COVID-19 by 3.5 times.

**RESPIRATORY DISEASE**

In a meta-analysis, patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) were at increased risk of severe complications or death from COVID-19. A study in the United Kingdom suggested that the presence of respiratory disease, including asthma, increased patients’ risk of mortality from COVID-19.

**CANCER**

Cancer patients are more likely to experience severe COVID-19. A study in Wuhan, China, showed that the mortality rate from COVID-19 was significantly increased in patients with cancer and was particularly high among those with blood cancers.

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