

Obesity may increase risk of long-term COVID-19 problems

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Some COVID-19 survivors can struggle with lingering medical problems for months.

According to recent Cleveland Clinic research, the risk for these long-term COVID-19 complications may be higher for those who suffer from obesity.

"Patients who had moderate or [severe obesity](#) had 30% greater risk of developing these chronic consequences of disease," said lead author Ali Aminian, MD, of Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Aminian and his team studied a registry of nearly 3,000 people who survived COVID-19 and followed them until January 2021.

Results show chronic complications from COVID-19 are extremely common—about 40% of people who survived the disease had subsequent chronic problems.

Results also show risk for hospital admission after the initial phase of COVID-19 was about 30% higher in people with moderate-to-severe obesity.

Other studies have shown obesity as a risk factor for developing a severe form of COVID-19 that may require [hospital admission](#), [intensive care](#), and ventilator support in the early phase of the disease.

Dr. Aminian said the best way to avoid COVID-19 and the chronic problems that may follow is vaccination.

"We know vaccines are extremely effective in protecting patients with obesity to reduce their risk of contracting disease. So, knowing that these patients are at greater risk for developing complications, we can say that vaccines are essential in these patients, so we need to encourage patients with obesity to get vaccinated," he explained.

Dr. Aminian's research is ongoing as he looks to determine the type of long-term follow-up care people with obesity need after a COVID-19 infection.

Complete study results can be found in the *Journal of Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism*.

More information: Ali Aminian et al, Association of obesity with postacute sequelae of COVID-19, *Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/dom.14454](#)

Provided by Cleveland Clinic

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