

Coronavirus and smoking: Could the COVID-19 infection fare worse for smokers?

[express.co.uk/life-style/health/1255963/coronavirus-symptoms-smoking-risk-tips-update-cases](https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/1255963/coronavirus-symptoms-smoking-risk-tips-update-cases)

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Coronavirus is nearing 200,000 cases around the globe, however, there are still a lot of unanswered questions when it comes to the deadly virus - questions such as 'if one is infected with the virus, do they then become immune to it?' and 'is there a treatment and what exactly happens to the body when one is infected?' The new coronavirus is a respiratory illness which affects the lungs and other parts of the respiratory system. For smokers who already have weak lungs, what does this mean for them?

Coronavirus now has everyone concerned. The virus has caused death amongst the elderly and those with preexisting conditions.

Leading health experts state conditions such as lung disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or a transplant history are most likely to experience severe COVID-19 symptoms such as shortness of breath and fever.

Scientists are now considering whether more subtle factors may intensify the disease or increase the initial chances of infection, including smokers and those living in high air pollution levels.



Coronavirus and smoking: Are smokers at an increased risk (Image: Getty Images)

As the virus affects the respiratory system, experts note that damage to the lungs from pollutants may increase the risk of respiratory tract infections from viruses such as the novel coronavirus.

It was announced last week in a press conference with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, regarding the coronavirus outbreak that smoking or vaping makes people “more vulnerable” to suffering severe illness once infected by Covid-19, according to Reuters.

Poor air can also cause lung inflammation that could worsen the symptoms of Covid-19.

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Aaron Bernstein, the interim director of the Centre for Climate Health and the Global Environment at the Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health said: “Given what we know now, it is very likely that people who are exposed to more air pollution and who are smoking tobacco products are going to fare worse if infected with cover than those who are breathing cleaner air and who don’t smoke.”

De Blasio added at a press conference: “If you are a smoker or a paper that does make you more vulnerable.

“If you are a smoker or a paper this is a very good time to stop that habit.”

Coronavirus and smoking: Smoking and the deadly virus both affect the lungs (Image: Getty Images)

[High blood pressure 'key dangerous factor' in coronavirus death](#)

The Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education states on its website: “When someone’s lungs are exposed to the flu or other infections the adverse effects of smoking or vaping are much more serious than among people who do not smoke or vape.

“Smoking is associated with increased development of acute respiratory distress syndrome in people with risk factors like severe infection, non-pulmonary sepsis or blunt trauma.

“The recent summary of the evidence on the pulmonary effects of cigarettes reported multiple ways that cigarettes impair lungs’ ability to fight off infections.”

Coronavirus and smoking: Leading health experts strongly suggest quitting smoking (Image: Getty Images)

With the threat of the deadly virus, quitting smoking cigarettes and vaping should be on the forefront of many people’s minds.

The NHS said: “Stopping smoking lets you breathe more easily. People breathe more easily and cough less when they give up smoking because their lung capacity improves by up to 10 percent within nine months.

"By stopping smoking, you'll be protecting the health of your non-smoking friends and family, too. Local stop smoking services are free, friendly and can massively boost your chances of quitting for good.

"These services staffed by expert advisers provide a range of proven methods to help you quit. Your GP can refer you, or you can phone your local stop smoking service to make an appointment with an adviser."