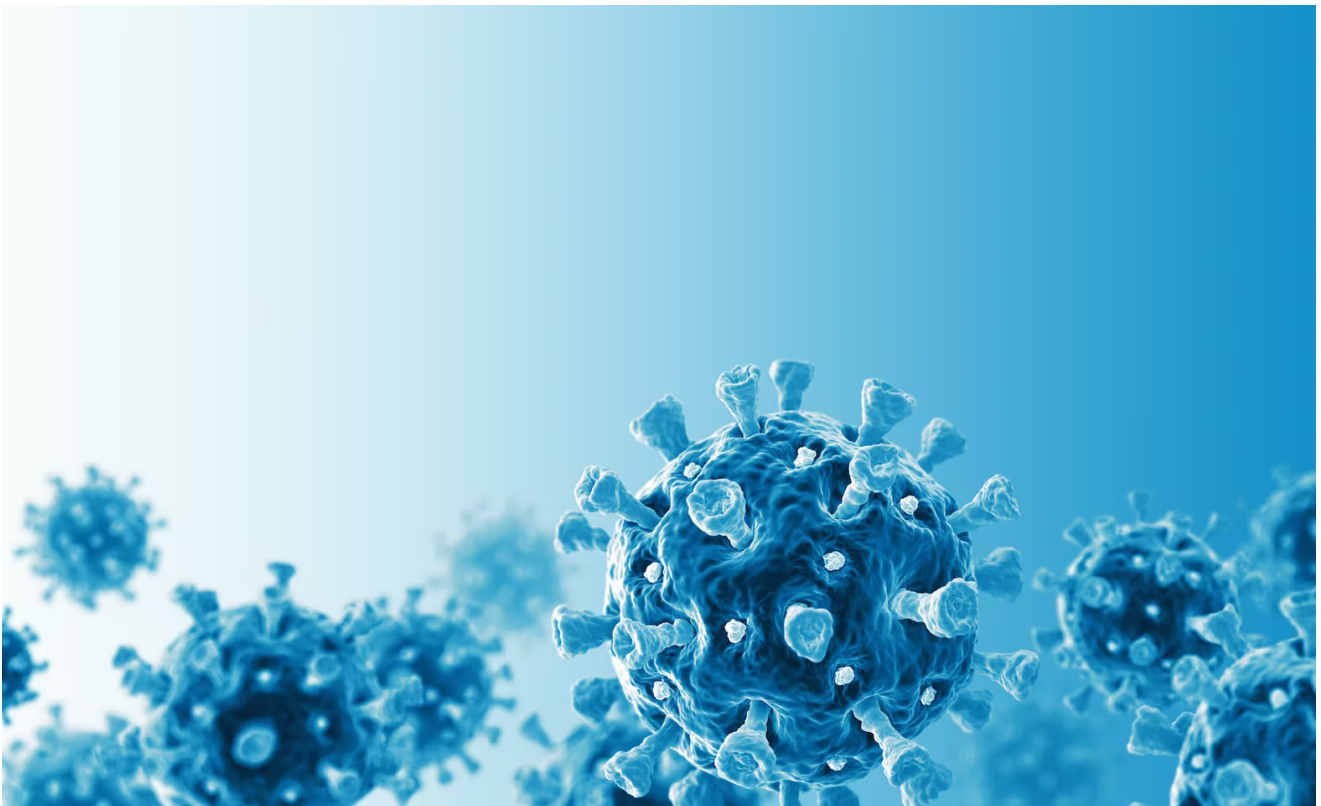


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ASTHMA • 4 minutes read

COVID-19 and asthma: should I be worried?

By [Kirsty Mason](#) | Medically reviewed by [Dr Luke Pratsides](#)



Please note that the information below on COVID-19, the COVID vaccine and UK government guidelines was accurate at the time of writing.

As a respiratory disease, concerns have been raised about how COVID-19 (which is a strand of coronavirus) affects people with [asthma](#). Information in the news can cause a lot of anxiety but it's important to look at the facts and follow government guidelines to ensure your safety.

What does the research say about coronavirus and asthma?

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Trends in data indicate that if you have asthma, you're no more susceptible to *catching* coronavirus than someone without asthma. But scientists are desperately searching for any clues as to whether an individual with asthma is more at risk of developing severe coronavirus.

Scientists and researchers have worked at a record pace throughout the pandemic and already, some research has come to light about COVID-19 and asthma.

So, what happens if someone with asthma gets coronavirus?

At this point, there's no simple answer and various factors such as age and comorbidities (the presence of more than one disease or condition, as well as coronavirus) make it difficult to determine if having asthma puts you at greater risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. By analysing death certificates, the [UK government](#) identified comorbidities such as hypertension, [diabetes](#), chronic kidney disease and obesity as risk factors for becoming seriously ill with COVID-19. Asthma is not included in their review.

Although there are limitations to the data, a [review](#) on hospitalised patients with COVID did **not** find a disproportionate number of patients with asthma, when compared to the general population. Encouragingly, data gathered from patients admitted to hospital with COVID-19 in China and Italy [replicated these results](#).

As it's a virus, contracting coronavirus may exacerbate [asthma](#) and lead to an asthma attack. This is why it's so important to keep taking your medication as instructed and avoid any known asthma triggers. If you have your asthma under control, you're less likely to experience complications if you get COVID-19. To make sure you're taking your [medication](#) properly, you may want to consider using a spacer with your inhaler. Another way to help keep your asthma under control is to use an asthma peak flow diary, which will enable you to monitor your condition.

When will I get the vaccine if I have asthma?

When you'll get the COVID vaccine depends on your age, the severity of your asthma, and whether you have any other underlying health conditions. Everyone over the age of 70 is [currently being offered the vaccine](#), as well as people who are clinically extremely vulnerable, which [includes very severe asthma](#).

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What happens if I get COVID-19 and I have asthma?

If you test positive for COVID-19 and you have asthma, it's important not to panic. You should self-isolate immediately and call 111 if your asthma symptoms are getting worse and you need advice. If you think you're having an asthma attack and need medical assistance, call 999 immediately and inform them that you have asthma and coronavirus.

Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 and asthma are similar, such as breathlessness and coughing, but it's important to bear in mind that your medication is designed to treat asthma, so won't alleviate symptoms of coronavirus. It's essential you continue to take your asthma medication even if you test positive for coronavirus. Keeping your asthma under control will reduce your risk of incurring complications with COVID-19. If you experience worsening shortness of breath despite using your asthma medication it is important to seek urgent medical advice through calling NHS 111 or attending A&E.

Does asthma treatment aggravate COVID?

You might have heard some confusing information in the news about how asthma medication interacts with COVID-19. Namely, some reports warned against using steroids to treat coronavirus, and in some cases, asthma controllers contain steroids. However, the [data was based on hospitalised patients](#) treated with systemic rather than inhaled steroids as part of their treatment for COVID-19 and did not consider asthma patients specifically. Therefore, someone with asthma should **not** stop taking their medication. The best way to reduce your risk of becoming seriously ill if you have asthma and coronavirus is to ensure you continue to take your asthma medication as directed and avoid any known triggers.

The bottom line

We're still learning about how coronavirus infects us and what it does to our bodies. As a respiratory disease, asthma is often discussed as a possible risk factor when it comes to developing severe COVID, but it's important to understand the facts and take the necessary precautions to reduce your risk of catching coronavirus.

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