

## Beyond the Lungs: COVID-19 Affects Many Parts of the Body

COVID-19 is best known as a disease of the lungs. In severe cases it can cause pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which is associated with difficulty breathing and low blood oxygen levels. If unchecked, ARDS can progress to respiratory failure, which is the cause of death in many fatal COVID-19 cases. As physicians and researchers learn more about COVID-19, an increasing number of organs and organ systems beyond the lungs are being found to be affected by the disease. Among the parts of the body most frequently affected by COVID-19 are the heart, brain, kidneys, intestines, blood vessels, blood, and immune system. Understanding the effects on blood vessels, blood, and the immune system is a particularly active area of research investigation because an overactive inflammatory response and abnormal blood clotting are emerging as important factors in severe disease. Effects of COVID-19 on the skin, liver, eyes, and nose have also been reported in some patients.

