

COVID-19, pandemic fatigue taking toll on heart health, survey shows

February 18 2022



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

As the pandemic drags on, a survey from Cleveland Clinic suggests Americans are becoming disinterested in healthy habits, which could negatively affect the heart.

"If people lose interest in keeping the [healthy lifestyles](#) it is going to create a problem long-term because once the arteries get blocked, once your [blood pressure](#) is high and it creates a problem in your arteries there is no way to reverse these problems easily," said Samir Kapadia, M.D., chairman of Cardiovascular Medicine at Cleveland Clinic.

The survey reveals fewer people are walking during the day and 77% report they often or sometimes spend their day sitting.

"Currently we recommend that as a healthy person you should at least exercise 30 to 45 minutes a day. If you do not do this, what happens is that cholesterol accumulates in the artery," explained Dr. Kapadia. "You also get obesity and a little bit of insulin resistance. Insulin resistance is really a bad thing where you can develop diabetes in the future, or even hardening of the [arteries](#)."

COVID-19 infection can harm the [heart](#) too. Results show one-in-four Americans who tested positive for the virus say it impacted their heart.

"COVID has affected a lot of people's hearts and it affects all different parts, so the most common one is where the heart muscle gets infected with the COVID virus or there is an inflammation in the heart muscle, or inflammation around the [heart muscle](#)," said Dr. Kapadia. "There is definite increase in blood clot formation with the COVID virus so sometimes the heart attack risk also goes up. And also, there is very clear evidence that the COVID can lead to irregular heartbeats or sometimes conduction problems inside the heart."

Two out of five people say they've experienced a heart-related issue

since the start of the pandemic. Dr. Kapadia encourages a renewed focus on exercise, a healthy diet and preventing COVID-19.

"We are all going to have a good life again, but we have to be healthy to enjoy that good life, so right now, it is a time to invest in heart health," he said.

If you're wondering about heart health, Dr. Kapadia said [weight gain](#), especially belly fat, is a sign of insulin resistance and a red flag that you should improve your diet and exercise habits.

And if you've recovered from COVID-19 but still feel short of breath, lightheaded or have palpitations, it's important to be evaluated by your doctor.

More information: The [survey from the Cleveland Clinic](#).

Provided by Cleveland Clinic

Citation: COVID-19, pandemic fatigue taking toll on heart health, survey shows (2022, February 18) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-02-covid-pandemic-fatigue-toll-heart.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--