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# New Arizona concern: Study shows asymptomatic COVID patients could have long-term lung damage

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A new study suggests a majority of asymptomatic coronavirus patients have long-term lung damage and that's a big concern in Arizona as cases among young people spike.



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**Arizona emergency room doctor gives warning ahead of holiday weekend**

Ahead of the Fourth of July weekend, a local emergency room doctor is issuing a warning to avoid large groups and wear masks.



**PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5)** - A new study shows that many who are asymptomatic with COVID-19 may have long-term lung damage just like those who get a severe case. This is particularly concerning here in Arizona as the number of young people coming down with coronavirus continues to skyrocket.



Even if they're asymptomatic, they could have significant lung abnormalities that weren't immediately apparent.

(Source: 3TV/CBS 5)

Arizona doctors are seeing a trend with COVID-19 that, at first, doesn't seem to add up.

“No I feel fine. I'm not that bad,” and they're relatively asymptomatic,” said emergency medicine Dr. Frank Lovecchio.

## How to improve your respiratory health in case you get Covid-19

Now, a study out of the Scripps Research Institute in San Diego backs up what Dr. Lovecchio is seeing first hand. The study found that on the Diamond Princess cruise ship earlier this year where there was a COVID outbreak, more than half of the 76 asymptomatic people infected on board now show significant lung abnormalities that weren't immediately apparent.

“The few times I've seen it and my colleagues, it's usually been younger folks,” said Lovecchio.

That's a big concern here in Arizona because over 39,000 of the

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state's COVID cases are in the 20 to 44 age group, far more than any other age group. But Dr. Lovecchio said these people may not even know their lungs are in poor condition.



The number of COVID-19 cases in Arizona continue to rise.  
(Source: 3TV/CBS 5)

"The body is so smart that if one area of the lung is blocked off because there's virus in there, it will say, 'I'm not going to give you blood!' And shunt blood, or move blood, to another part of the lung," he said.

And he said younger people specifically have more lung capacity.

"It's truly amazing that you can cut off like 10% of your lung and have no difference in your respiratory reserve or how you're breathing, etc., so that's probably what we're seeing," Dr. Lovecchio said.



"The thing that troubles us, the thing that scares us is, is this going to last forever?" Dr. Frank Lovecchio said.

He said this doesn't mean everyone who is asymptomatic will have long term lung effects, but he does say it's something to watch for, as even doctors don't know what effects those could be and for how long you could have them.

"The thing that troubles us, the thing that scares us is, is this going to last forever?" he said.

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Briana Whitney is a reporter for Arizona's Family and has worked tirelessly to give a voice to those who don't have one. **Read more** about Briana.



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