

- Lungs—Diseases / Virus

## Scans show devastating impact of virus on lungs

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IF a picture speaks a thousand words, then this one says “get vaccinated”.



The CT scan images show the lungs of a patient battling Covid-19 alongside those of a healthy patient.

The lungs with extensive white blemishes are succumbing to the virus, while the ones without are fighting fit and normal.

Health experts say the images should serve as an urgent wake-up call to anyone yet to be vaccinated.

Royal Melbourne Hospital radiology head Stefan Heinz said the CT scan of the healthy lungs were black and showing “basically all air”.

“Air is black on a CT scan,” Associate Professor Heinz said.

“The lungs in the patient who has Covid are all white and full of inflammatory cells and virus and abnormal cells.

“When it gets as bad as (this one), they can end up needing mechanical ventilation so you really have to pump the air in through an endotracheal tube.”

If the patient deteriorated further, they might need an even more drastic treatment called extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, in which the patient’s blood vessels are hooked up to a machine that oxygenates them externally.

The scans showed the patient with Covid was relying on less than half their lung capacity, which was incompatible with survival, Prof Heinz said.

“That’s why he’s got these tubes, that’s the ETT or the endotracheal tube, that’s where you have an operation that just goes down into your trachea and then mechanically ventilates you,” he said.

The Covid patient would be sedated, unconscious and mechanically ventilated, with ECG leads used to monitor him.