Dramatic visual evidence shows how COVID decimates the lungs and causes long-term damage

More than three years after the start of the pandemic, many Covid survivors continue to struggle. Some, especially those who became so severely ill that they were hospitalized and unable to breathe on their own, face lasting lung damage.

To better understand the long-term impact of Covid's assault on the lungs, The New York Times spoke with three patients who were hospitalized during the pandemic's early waves, interviewed doctors who treated them and reviewed C.T. scans of their lungs over time.

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One patient spent time connected to a ventilator; the other two were so debilitated they required months on a heart-lung bypass machine called ECMO. These patients were not yet vaccinated — for two, vaccines weren’t available, and the third had planned to get vaccinated but was infected before he could.

The Times analyzed hundreds of millions of data points from the patients’ scans to reconstruct their lungs in 3-D. The resulting visualization offers a vivid, visceral picture of damage that can linger years after infection and irrevocably alter everyday life.

This is an excerpt. Read the full article here