

A handful of genetic and structural analyses suggest SARS-CoV-2's spike protein is activated by an enzyme found in lots of human tissues, including the lungs, liver and small intestines. That means that the virus has the potential to attack multiple organs, and it could explain some of the symptoms of the infection. Other research has shown that the spike protein binds to a particular receptor on human cells — angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2). Both results, although early, hint at places where a treatment might target the virus. (Nature Briefing 09.03.20)