

## What is Long COVID?

Sometimes sickness can linger. For example, if you have a common cold that results in a cough lasting more than a month, it might need attention. Like other illnesses, symptoms of COVID-19 can linger too.

You may have heard of long COVID. Symptoms of COVID-19 that last over four weeks might be long COVID. Some people's long COVID symptoms can last for months or longer.

There are many symptoms of COVID and long COVID that can affect different organs in your body. Some people with long COVID might have "brain fog" while others may have lasting heart problems. It affects people differently. These symptoms can also be signs of other illnesses, so it is important not to assume you have post-COVID condition. Tell your health care providers about your concerns with any ongoing or new symptoms. This can help them rule out other illnesses.

People can get long COVID even if they weren't terribly sick when they had the virus. Also, certain variants can make long COVID worse. A variant is a version of COVID as it changes over time. All viruses change a bit over time.

### How Can I Avoid Long COVID?

Current research shows that long COVID affects older people more than younger people and unvaccinated more than vaccinated people. The best way to avoid long COVID is to not get the virus at all. Preventing COVID-19 infections and long COVID is dependent on staying up to date with vaccines and protecting yourself from the virus.

Being confidently aware of your surroundings and the people around you is key to avoiding COVID. To avoid getting sick, if a friend has any COVID symptoms, wait until they are better and have tested to visit. Continue to follow good handwashing practices and wear a mask as directed by your health department and anytime it would make you feel more comfortable.

If, despite your best efforts, you do get the virus, studies have shown that being up to date with vaccinations decreases the risk of getting long COVID and reduces the number and severity of symptoms. **Up to date** means you have had all the vaccinations you are due for, including boosters. Scientists will keep studying COVID-19 and working on treatments. In the meantime, we can all do our part to keep ourselves and others safe and healthy.

### Symptoms of Long COVID

- Fatigue
- Elevated heart rate
- Loss of smell and/or taste
- Kidney failure
- Neurological effects, headache
- Problems with attention, concentration, language and memory
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle and joint pain, weakness
- Sleep disruptions
- Heart conditions
- Blood clots, including pulmonary embolism