



Town of New Castle, NH
Settled 1623
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COVID Update July 18, 2022

This update is authored by our esteemed Diane Coniglio, PharmD. Though there are many current COVID issues, we thought it timely to present a bit about long COVID.

Long COVID Basics:

What is long COVID?

- No 'standard' definition
- Having symptoms that didn't exist before a confirmed or suspected COVID infection and that last a couple of months after infection resolved, and can't be explained by something else
- When someone has new, returning, or ongoing long-term problems after being infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

What causes long-COVID?

Not sure; working theories include:

- Persistent virus or virus particles in tissues that trigger chronic inflammation
- Acute viral infection causes (new) autoimmune condition
- Disturbed gut microbiome (normal bacteria in the gut)
- Reactivation of preexisting viruses (eg, Epstein-Barr)

Common symptoms of Long COVID

- Wide range of symptoms – not the same for every person
- Can be new and different from original infection
- Can be hard to explain and manage
- Can go away and come back

General symptoms: tiredness, fatigue that interferes with daily activities; symptoms that get worse after physical activity or mental effort (post-exertional malaise); fever

Lungs/heart: difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, fast beating or pounding heart (palpitations)

- COVID survivors have 2x risk of pulmonary embolism (lung clot) or breathing problems (vs those who didn't get COVID) [Post-COVID Conditions Among Adult COVID-19](#)

[Survivors Aged 18–64 and ≥65 Years — United States, March 2020–November 2021 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Kidney: kidney failure [Post–COVID Conditions among Adult COVID-19 Survivors Aged 18–64 and ≥65 Years — United States, March 2020–November 2021 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Brain/neurologic/mental health: difficulty thinking or concentrating (brain fog), headache, sleep problems, dizziness when standing, changing smell or taste, depression, anxiety

Digestive/Gut: diarrhea, stomach pain

Vascular: blood clots and vascular issues (pins and needle feelings)

Miscellaneous: joint or muscle pain, rash, changes in menstrual cycles

When do symptoms of long COVID start and how long can they last?

- Symptoms usually start about 4 weeks after initial infection, when most cases are resolved/finished and Symptoms can last weeks, months, years

Who is more likely to get long COVID?

- Anyone infected with SARS-CoV-2 can get long COVID, even if symptoms were mild or they had no symptoms at all (asymptomatic infection).
- Recent study revealed that 1 in 5 COVID survivors 18 to 64 yrs old and 1 in 4 COVID survivors ≥65 yrs old have at least one condition that could be considered long COVID.

New; [Nearly One in Five American Adults Who Have Had COVID-19 Still Have "Long COVID" \(cdc.gov\)](#)

- More than 40% of US adults report having had COVID (*probably more*) and 1 in 5 (19%) of those have long COVID symptoms; this translates to 1 in 13 US adults (7.5%) have long COVID
- Younger adults (50-59 yrs) more likely to have persistent symptoms than older adults (80+ yrs)
- Bisexual and transgender adults more likely to get long COVID than people of other sexual orientations
- Women more likely to report long COVID symptoms (9.4%) than men (5.5%).
- Hispanic adults have higher rates of long COVID (9%) vs non-Hispanic white adults (7.5%), Black (6.8%) adults, and more than twice the rate in non-Hispanic Asian adults (3.7%).

Long COVID seems to happen more often in people who:

- Had severe COVID-19, especially if they were hospitalized and needed intensive care
- Had MIS (multisystem inflammatory syndrome) during or after COVID-19 illness.
- Had underlying medical conditions before getting COVID-19
- Were not vaccinated when they were infected– these people seem to be at higher risk for long COVID vs vaccinated people who had breakthrough COVID infections.



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Does long COVID occur only in adults?

- Children and adolescents can get long COVID but it is more common in adults
- Children who had mild or severe COVID (including MIS-C) can have lingering symptoms
- Children report sleep problems, fatigue, headache, muscle and joint pain, cough and trouble concentrating [What is long COVID? | American Medical Association \(ama-assn.org\)](#)
- Young children may have trouble describing their problems or symptoms [Caring for People with Post-COVID Conditions | CDC](#)

How is long COVID diagnosed?

- No diagnostic test available at this time
- Most people have evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection (ie, antibodies), but some people with long COVID symptoms never tested positive or even knew they were infected.
- Hard to diagnose because symptoms could be related to other (new or preexisting) health problems

How is long COVID treated?

- No single specific treatment. Long COVID is different in everyone.

How do I prevent long COVID?

- **Best way to prevent long COVID is to protect yourself from getting infected in the first place by getting vaccinated and boosted when eligible.**
- Many experts think that people who are vaccinated but get a breakthrough infection are less likely to report long COVID problems, as compared to people who are unvaccinated.

Please be considerate of our neighbors and community. Everyone must adhere to one's own risk tolerance levels for COVID exposure, as well as respect our neighbors' risk tolerances.

Yours in Health,

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