



Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome: Frequently Asked Questions

Most people who have COVID-19 completely recover after their initial illness. However, some people have lasting symptoms and health problems. Post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, also called long COVID or chronic COVID, refers to a wide range of symptoms that develop during or after COVID-19 illness and continue for several weeks or months. People who have post-acute COVID-19 syndrome are sometimes called long haulers. This document contains information about the syndrome and where to get care.

What are symptoms and conditions associated with post-acute COVID-19 syndrome?

COVID-19 is a respiratory (lung) disease, but it can affect other parts of the body as well. For this reason, symptoms of post-acute COVID-19 syndrome vary widely. The most common symptom is fatigue (tiredness). Other more common symptoms include sleep difficulties, persistent cough, shortness of breath or chest pain, headaches, and joint and muscle pain. People may also experience loss of smell or taste, rash, hair loss, heart racing, night sweats, inability to control body temperature, constipation, diarrhea and other symptoms.

Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome may include other serious health conditions, such as:

- **Myalgic encephalomyelitis/Chronic fatigue syndrome:** A complex illness including exhaustion, tiring with exertion, and difficulties with memory and concentration (also called “brain fog”).
- **Blood clots and blood vessel problems:** The virus that causes COVID-19 can make blood cells more likely to clump and form clots. These clots can form in the lungs, legs, kidneys or other organs. Large clots in the heart can lead to heart attacks and clots in the brain can cause strokes.
- **Mental health and well-being:** Surviving the experience of acute COVID-19 can later lead to post-traumatic stress syndrome, depression and anxiety.

Can I spread COVID-19 to others while I have these symptoms or conditions?

People with post-acute COVID-19 syndrome have symptoms for weeks or months after no longer being contagious. Most people who have COVID-19 are no longer contagious by 10 days after their symptoms began.

How long does post-acute COVID-19 syndrome last?

There is a wide range of time to recovery, and it may take weeks, months, or longer for symptoms to go away completely.

Who is at risk for post-acute COVID-19 syndrome?

Studies show that post-acute COVID-19 syndrome may be more common in people with older age, females, and people who have obesity, a mental health problem, or three or more chronic medical conditions (such as lung disease, diabetes or hypertension). Post-acute COVID-19 syndrome is also more common in people who had severe COVID-19 illness requiring hospitalization. However, anyone can experience post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, even younger adults and otherwise healthy people, and people that only had mild COVID-19.

How is post-acute COVID-19 syndrome treated?

There is still a lot we do not know about post-acute COVID-19 syndrome. Treatment is based on the symptoms each person has and may include physical rehabilitation, breathing and mental exercises, and medications such as corticosteroids or anticoagulants. People with ongoing symptoms should seek care from a health care provider. People with post-acute COVID syndrome may need to be treated by infectious disease, heart, lung, kidney or other specialists depending on their symptoms.

I think I have post-acute COVID-19 syndrome. What should I do?

If you have persistent symptoms follow up with your primary care provider or refer to the list of [Post-COVID Care Clinics](#) to schedule an appointment with a multi-disciplinary health care team with expertise in post-COVID care. If it is a medical emergency, call **911**.

Consider joining a support group such as [Body Politic](#) or [Survivor Corps](#) to connect with others who have this syndrome and for more information. Other resources include:

- [COVID Advocacy Exchange](#)
- [National Patient Advocate Foundation](#)
- Facebook groups like Long Haul COVID fighters

What if I do not have a health care provider or health insurance?

If you need a health care provider, NYC Health + Hospitals welcomes all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Visit nychealthandhospitals.org for more information and to search for a health care provider, or call 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692) or **311**. NYC Health + Hospitals has facilities that specialize in post-acute COVID-19 syndrome.

Should I get vaccinated if I have post-acute COVID-19 syndrome?

Yes, since it is possible to get COVID-19 again, you should get vaccinated. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and may boost the protection your body has already built up.

Visit nyc.gov/vaccinefinder to find a vaccination site and make an appointment. You can also call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) to make an appointment at an NYC site.