

Journey to a diagnosis of long COVID

If you're not feeling like yourself after having COVID-19, you're not alone. Many people have what's called long COVID. That includes people who didn't have any symptoms during their initial infection. Because long COVID can look different for everyone, it can be tough for you and your doctor to figure out what's going on. **But know that what you're feeling is real.**

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The doctor said I was done with COVID-19, but I just don't feel like myself.



10%-20%

of people with COVID get prolonged symptoms.¹

There are **55 potential symptoms of long COVID**.² Most common are fatigue, headache, attention problems, hair loss and breathing problems.²

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My doctor ran a bunch of tests, but they all came back normal. They said nothing was wrong with me.



There is no test for long COVID yet.^{1,3}

Scientists' understanding continues to evolve, so it can sometimes be tough for a doctor to confirm you have it. You might have even felt ignored by your doctor – or your friends and family – when you reached out for help. That's never a good feeling, and when you're feeling unwell it can be devastating.

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My doctor referred me to a therapist. They taught me helpful coping skills, but I still had ongoing physical symptoms.

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I haven't found anyone who can help.

3.2+ million

Americans may have lingering symptoms from COVID.⁴

Symptoms could have started during the initial COVID infection, be completely new or have gone away and returned.⁵ To be considered long COVID, the symptoms must last at least two months.¹

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Physical therapy is only helping so much. I'm frustrated with the slow progress.



There's currently no specific medication therapy available.

Some holistic treatments such as rehabilitation have been shown to be helpful.^{1,6}

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I went back to work, but some days I really struggle to keep up.

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My friends are planning our annual trip without me because I don't have the energy or stamina to travel right now.



With fatigue and “brain fog,” many people with long COVID have trouble getting through tasks that used to be routine – at home or at work. **Be patient with yourself, and be open with others if you feel like you have a safe space to do so.**

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It's difficult for my loved ones to understand what it's like living with an invisible and unpredictable illness.

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It was hard at first, but I've found it helpful to talk about what I'm experiencing and to connect with others who can understand.

6 in 10

adults in the U.S. are living with a chronic disease.⁷

Look for community and online resources that support people with chronic illness. These communities can offer reassurance and validation. **You are not alone.**



1 in 3

people are diagnosed with neurological or psychological symptoms in the 6 months after they contracted COVID.⁴

Navigating recovery can be exhausting, especially when it feels like there is no end in sight. Many patients with long COVID have also been diagnosed with anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁴ It can be hard to prioritize your mental health when you don't feel physically well.

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Everything I've tried doesn't seem to be helping. It feels like I'm just wasting my time, energy and money.



Long COVID can be classified as a disability.⁸

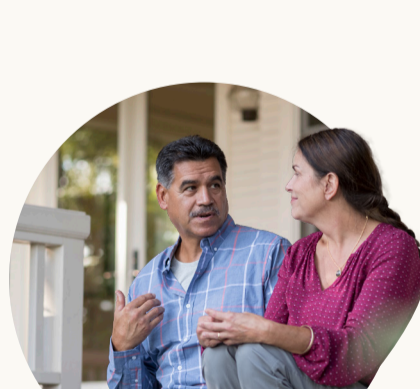
It can be hard to admit you are struggling, but you don't need to suffer in silence. Reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for help navigating available support.

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Being open about my continued health struggles with my manager helped relieve some of the pressure to perform.

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Receiving both support and compassion made a big difference in my journey.



Getting an official long COVID diagnosis is just one step in your recovery

If you've had COVID, be sure to inform your doctor when you're experiencing long-term symptoms. If you feel like your concerns are being dismissed, seek a second opinion. You are your own best advocate.



As with any chronic illness, long COVID patients aren't the only ones affected by their illness. It can be hard to watch a loved one struggle or to care for someone with ongoing health needs. It's important to prioritize your mental and physical well-being, especially as you offer long-term support to a loved one.

Still struggling to find support? Contact your Employee Assistance Program. We're here for the long haul.



Scan the QR code for more resources.

Stock photos used.
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 8. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: Office of Civil Rights. Guidance on “long COVID” as a disability under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557. hhs.gov/civil-rights/providers/civil-rights-covid19/guidance-long-covid-disability/index.html#:~:text=2.0r%20more%20major%20life%20activities. Last reviewed July 26, 2021. Accessed May 5, 2022.
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