Long Covid overview

What is Long Covid?

- For many people, Covid symptoms are usually short-lived. However, for an estimated 1 in 10, symptoms can last longer than three months.
- Long Covid is a term for all the symptoms that continue after 12 weeks of the illness.
- Long Covid can happen even if you didn’t have a positive PCR test or experienced only mild Covid symptoms.
- Some people with Long Covid find that their symptoms ease and then flare up, but many find their symptoms gradually get better over time.

What are the symptoms?

Long Covid symptoms can include:

- Fatigue – Physical and mental
- Ongoing breathlessness or difficulty breathing
- Difficulty concentrating
- Heart palpitations
- Loss of taste or smell
- Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS). Symptoms include: dizziness, high heart rate when standing or sitting which improves with lying down, nausea, fatigue and sweating or other balance issues.

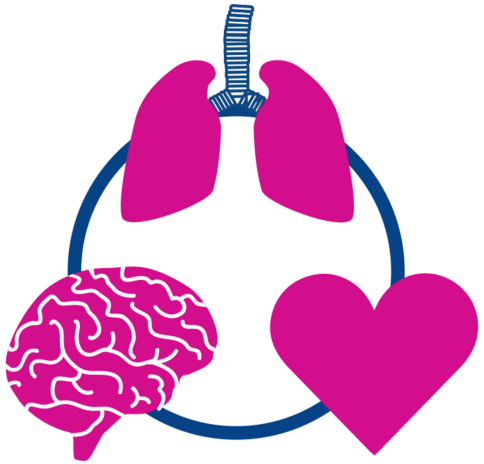
Long Covid symptoms

Long Covid symptoms can also include:

- New aches and pains
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Headaches and tinnitus
- Low grade fever or chills
- Rashes or itching
- Some people also find they are more prone to infections and fevers.

Organ damage after Covid

- If you were severely ill with Covid and especially if you were in hospital or on a respirator, there is a chance that it may damage your organs.
- If you are experiencing pain or any other symptoms you didn’t have before, speak to your doctor or other health professional.
- You may need further investigation to see whether your organs are damaged.
- Organ damage after Covid is usually treatable.



Long Covid and vaccines

- People who have had Covid can still be reinfected. It is important that, if you have Long Covid, you consider accepting vaccination and immunisation programmes that are offered to you by your healthcare provider.
- There is no evidence that any of the current Covid-19 vaccines can trigger Long Covid symptoms.
- It is also important that, those with other underlying long term health conditions, consider accepting vaccination and immunisation programmes that are offered to them by their healthcare provider.

Treating Long Covid

Long Covid treatments are currently still in development. Usually, you will be treated for individual symptoms.

You may be treated with:

- Occupational therapy (OT) or physiotherapy
- Breathing exercises
- Medication to treat pain, breathlessness, or some other symptoms
- Self-management – changes to your lifestyle to help reduce symptoms
- Anti-inflammatory medications

Long Covid and exercise

- If you have Long Covid you may need to be careful with exercise and activity.
- Many people with Long Covid find that they now experience fatigue or a flare up of their symptoms after exercise (sometimes called Post Exertional Symptom Exacerbation or Post Exertional Malaise). This can happen up to 48 hours afterwards.
- This means that you need to be careful about what activity you do. Reduce exercise where possible and do not do anything that causes you pain or discomfort. You may need to learn new ways to pace yourself carefully around any activity.
- Always ask to speak to a health professional who is familiar with PEM or PESE who can help you with this (see Further Information and Support for contacts).

Will it get better?

- Long Covid symptoms tend to improve over time in many patients, although it isn’t yet clear how many and for how long this takes.
- Recovery time is different for everybody and is not linked to the severity of your initial illness or whether you were in hospital or not.
- With good management, pacing and appropriate medicine, even lasting symptoms can be more easily managed.

Further information and support

Further advice and support around Long Covid can be accessed through:

www.chss.org.uk
www.nhsinform.scot
www.longcovid.org
www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk
PoTS UK: www.potsuk.org/
Long COVID Physio: www.longcovid.physio/

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The following organisations contributed to this presentation

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