

Getting Ready to Talk About Long COVID with Your Doctor

What is Long COVID?

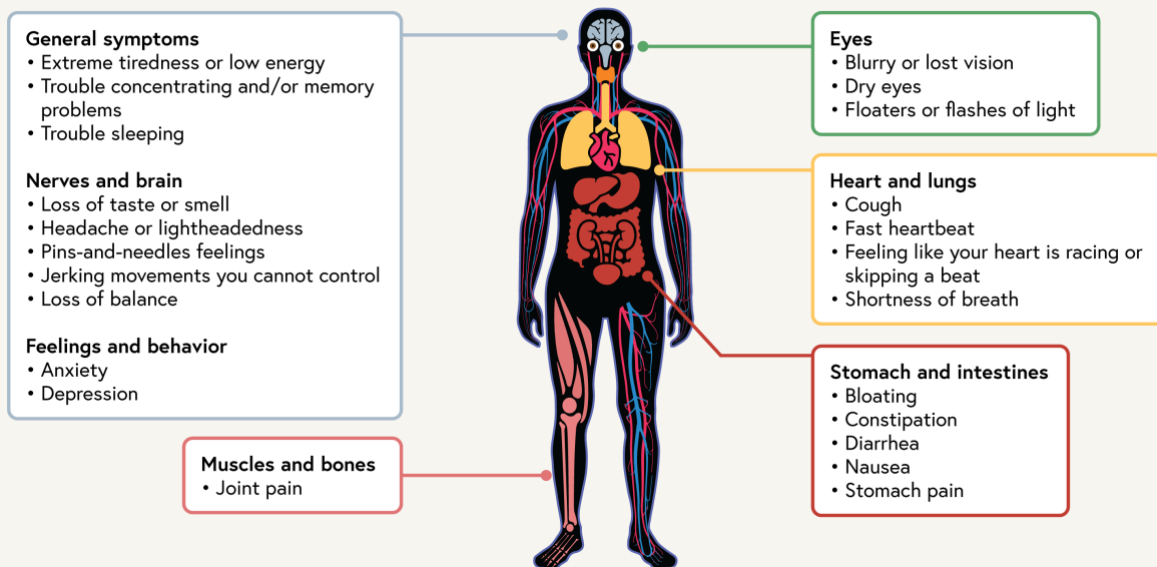
Long COVID is when someone has one or more new, ongoing, or worsening symptoms that last for at least three months after getting COVID-19. It is sometimes also called “Long Haul COVID” or “Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC).”

Long COVID can happen to anyone, even if they had mild or no symptoms when they had COVID-19. Some people may have symptoms that do not go away, and others may have symptoms that come and go over time. Some people who do not have Long COVID symptoms at first could start having health problems months after having COVID-19.

What are the symptoms of Long COVID?

There are more than 200 symptoms of Long COVID that can be different for everyone.

Most Common Symptoms In People with Long COVID



You may have some of these symptoms, or others not listed here. Right now, there is no single test that can diagnose you with Long COVID. But doctors can look at your symptoms and health history to recognize it. Knowing the possible symptoms can help you talk to your doctor about what you are experiencing.

How else might Long COVID affect me?

Long COVID can affect people in different ways. Some people may:

- Feel extremely tired after physical activity, like walking, moving around, or doing errands, even after rest
- Have trouble thinking after doing something stressful or feeling a strong emotion
- Have trouble focusing at work or remembering things clearly

Some people with Long COVID may also have related health problems, like post-exertional malaise (PEM), myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS). PEM and ME/CFS can make you feel very tired after doing daily tasks that require mental, physical, or emotional activity. Even small activities can cause a “crash,” where you may need to rest for hours or days. POTS can make your heart start to beat very fast and can cause lightheadedness and dizziness when standing up. The tiredness caused by PEM, ME/CFS, and POTS does not get better with regular rest.

These are just a few examples of health problems that can occur with Long COVID. It’s important to let your doctor know about all your symptoms. Some symptoms may overlap with other conditions, and your doctor can help you understand what you’re experiencing to decide what steps to take next. Read more about other related health problems at [cdc.gov/long-covid/signs-symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/long-covid/signs-symptoms).

What should I do if I think I have Long COVID?

If you think you may have Long COVID, it’s important to talk with your doctor. Make an appointment with your doctor to talk about your concerns or talk about these issues during your regular doctor’s visits.

Right now, there is no cure for Long COVID

While there is not yet a cure for Long COVID, your doctor may recommend medicines or other treatments to help manage your symptoms and related conditions.

For some people, planned rest can help the body and mind feel better. People with PEM, ME/CFS, and POTS symptoms may find it helpful to rest in a quiet and comfortable place without noise or bright lights. However, regular rest, like sitting down for a few minutes, may not help the fatigue or other symptoms related to these conditions and Long COVID.

It's important to know that not everyone with Long COVID will have fatigue, and that many Long COVID symptoms do not get better with rest. Try to notice and write down the activities that make your symptoms worse or cause a “crash,” even if you do not have fatigue. Share this information with your doctor to help them understand your symptoms.

Before your doctor's appointment

Try your best to remember when you had COVID-19 (once or multiple times) and what your experience was like during that time. Write down all the symptoms you had, even if they went away.

Keep a journal for at least 1–2 weeks to write down:

- Your symptoms, including when they start, how bad they are, if they happen more when you do a certain activity, how long they last, and anything that makes them feel better or worse; write down any patterns and groups of symptoms you see
 - Try to do this at the same time of day over the 1–2 weeks
 - Try to do this when you change from one activity to another because that is when symptoms could get worse
- What activities you've been doing, like going to work or household tasks
- A list of all the medications you take, including antiviral medicines (used to treat illnesses like COVID-19)
- Your vaccine history
- Records of tests you've done with other doctors, or a list of specialists you've seen

During your doctor's appointment

For appointments with your doctor, do the following:

- Bring a list of up to three symptoms that bother you the most, and put them in order, starting with the ones you are the most concerned about
- Ask questions about your symptoms and how to manage them
- Be ready to talk about what your days are like, including what activities make your symptoms worse, and any medicines that seem to make your symptoms better or worse
- Make sure you understand the next steps in your care

- Ask for a summary of what you and your doctor talked about during your visit
- Ask your doctor to write down important instructions for you to bring home

After your doctor's appointment

Follow the plan you talked about with your doctor. Remember that there is still a lot we are learning about Long COVID, and that different doctors may have different ways of working with people affected by Long COVID. If you still have questions, you can make an appointment with another doctor for a second opinion on how to care for your Long COVID symptoms.

If you or your doctor want to read more about what RECOVER has learned about Long COVID in adults, explore RECOVER publications at recoverCOVID.info/adult-pubs2.