



RECOVER

Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery

An Initiative Funded by the National Institutes of Health



Winter 2025

RECOVER Newsletter

Thank you for being a part of the RECOVER study! We are so grateful to our participants for helping us learn more about Long COVID.

This newsletter has been created to share the latest updates from the RECOVER study with you.

RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT & VOICES OF RECOVER

Drs. Valerie Flaherman and Torri Metz, Pregnancy Cohort Principal Investigators (PIs), and Pregnancy Cohort Participant, Jenice, on the Impact of COVID-19 on Long-Term Health and Pregnancy

Jenice, a RECOVER pregnancy study participant, is a mom who balances many responsibilities. She raises her family's chickens, takes her kids John and Alex to school and football practice, hikes, and works in lung health research. She never imagined that her own health story would become the focus of scientists studying Long COVID.

After Jenice got COVID-19 while pregnant with her youngest, Alex, she had headaches, fatigue, and worsening asthma symptoms for months. After Alex's birth, a RECOVER research team noticed her COVID-19 history in her electronic health record (EHR) and invited her to join the pregnancy cohort. With 15 years in research, Jenice felt it was a natural way to help answer questions about what families like hers were facing.

Being part of RECOVER revealed answers that Jenice did not expect. One study test led doctors to order a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test, which showed that she had multiple sclerosis (MS), a condition where the immune system attacks nerve fibers in the brain and spinal cord. MS can cause tiredness, weakness, trouble walking, and vision problems. Jenice's Long COVID symptoms overlap with MS symptoms, making it difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins.



Jenice

(Continued on next page)

RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT & VOICES OF RECOVER (continued)

Stories like Jenice's are why the RECOVER pregnancy study is so important. "Pregnancy changes how every organ system works, and some treatments just aren't safe during pregnancy," explains Dr. Torri Metz, a maternal-fetal medicine specialist and lead PI at the University of Utah's pregnancy cohort. Like Jenice, many pregnant women can get sick with chronic (long-term) and acute (short-term) illnesses that require treatment. As a doctor who focuses on medical conditions during pregnancy, Dr. Metz acknowledges this unique situation, and says, "Caring for moms while studying how pregnancy affects disease helps us understand conditions like Long COVID in ways no other study can." She adds that the goal of the RECOVER pregnancy study is to "give families and doctors real-world information to guide decisions about health and the future."



Dr. Torri Metz

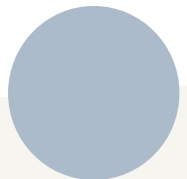
Similarly, Dr. Valerie Flaherman, a pediatrician and RECOVER pregnancy cohort PI at the University of California, San Francisco, says, "During pregnancy, the immune system (the body's defense system) is less active so it doesn't mistake the baby for something harmful. That makes this an important time to study how illnesses affect both mom and child. With COVID-19, we were able to study how a new virus interacts with the body during this stage, something researchers had never been able to see before."



Dr. Valerie Flaherman

Participants like Jenice and her son allow researchers to learn more about the role of COVID-19 and Long COVID in this special relationship. Dr. Flaherman points out, "This is a once-in-a-lifetime group of moms and children."

For Jenice, RECOVER is more than a research study. It helped uncover her MS diagnosis, giving her a clearer understanding of her health. She's learned that taking care of herself is just as important as caring for her family and sees the value of resting and letting others support her when needed. "Don't stress yourself [over] the pile of laundry that's in the corner taunting you," she jokes. "When you're feeling tired and drained, it's important to take joy in the moments and take help where you can."



UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH

Study Findings: Long COVID risk for pregnant and non-pregnant women during the Omicron wave

This summary explains what researchers found about pregnancy and Long COVID. The study looks at whether women who were pregnant when they got the Omicron type of COVID-19 were more likely to develop Long COVID than those who were not pregnant.

Researchers studied the symptom surveys and study visits of more than 2,400 RECOVER pregnancy participants, ages 18–45, to see if being pregnant while having COVID-19 impacted the risk of developing Long COVID. They found that about 10.2% of the participants who had COVID-19 while

pregnant later got Long COVID, compared with 10.6% of the those who were not pregnant at the time of infection. This suggests that there was no real difference in the chance of getting Long COVID based on whether someone was pregnant or not when they got COVID-19. This study is important because it helps researchers better understand the risk of developing COVID-19 based on whether or not someone is pregnant.

Read this paper:

recoverCOVID.info/Omicron-Pregnancy

CELEBRATING ADULT PARTICIPANTS

RECOVER's dedicated adult participants have given an incredible amount of time and effort over the past 4 years by completing more than 1.3 million tests, nearly 126,000 surveys, and over 43,000 study visits.

Thanks to these participants, RECOVER researchers have taken big steps toward understanding, diagnosing, preventing, and treating Long COVID. Researchers have published 10 papers in leading journals on what they've learned. Other scientists are also using them to plan new studies and make more discoveries about Long COVID. This means that participants' contributions are helping shape future research, support important decisions, and advance knowledge about Long COVID in the scientific community.

RECOVER is now preparing for the next phase of the adult study, where researchers will follow some adult participants for several more years. This next phase will be an important way to learn more about how Long COVID affects adults over a longer period of time. More information about this phase will be shared in early 2026.

Learn more about the next phase of RECOVER

recoverCOVID.info/Stay-Informed

Read adult RECOVER publications

recoverCOVID.info/Adult-Pubs



SHARING THE SCIENCE

R3 Seminar Recap: Long COVID After SARS-CoV-2 During Pregnancy

On June 30, 2025, RECOVER researchers shared new findings on how getting COVID-19 while pregnant may affect the chance of developing Long COVID. This RECOVER Research Review (R3) Seminar featured Dr. Torri Metz, University of Utah; Dr. Chengxi Zang, Cornell University; and Dr. Valerie Flaherman, University of California, San Francisco.

Watch the Long COVID and pregnancy seminar recording:
recoverCOVID.info/R3-LC-Pregnancy

Read the paper discussed: recoverCOVID.info/LC-Pregnancy

View recordings of past R3 Seminars or register for future R3 Seminars:
recoverCOVID.info/r3-seminar-series



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tell us about yourself and what
you think about this newsletter.



YOUR DATA MATTERS

Your privacy is important to us. We will continue to follow all laws to protect your personal information, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which is a federal law that requires researchers and healthcare providers to follow specific privacy rules when handling patients' information.