

Summer 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

Dr. Katherine Irby, RECOVER Hub Principal Investigator (PI), on the Impact of Pediatric Long COVID on Children and their Caregivers

Adults with Long COVID may struggle with activities like going to work, caring for themselves or loved ones, or socializing because of their symptoms. But what about kids living with Long COVID who can't go to school or join extracurricular activities? Dr. Katherine Irby has seen this firsthand: children and teenagers, including high-performers and athletes, are unable to return to their routines after getting COVID-19. "Their worlds changed after COVID. They haven't returned to the classroom. They no longer participate in sports."

Dr. Irby is a critical care specialist for children, and she also leads research as the PI at 14 RECOVER sites for the Arkansas Children's Research Institute. She studies the long-term effects on children in intensive care units and how Long COVID impacts children and their families.

Long COVID also affects caregivers. As the parent of a child with multiple severe food allergies, Dr. Irby knows how hard it is to manage health issues daily. Her experience helps her connect with the patients and families in her care in a personal way.

She believes it takes a village to support and care for kids. "The most important support is for schools and communities to accept the diagnosis of Long COVID," she explains. "As we continue to follow these children and publish the findings, we are able to validate the reality of what the patients with Long COVID are experiencing."



"RECOVER gives these families hope because they know we are looking to better understand Long COVID."

Learn more about how to support and advocate for your child living with Long COVID by downloading our pediatric Long COVID tip sheet: recoverCOVID.info/TipSheet-Summer2025

VOICES OF RECOVER

Gregg

Adult Cohort Participant, Illinois



"Imagine you've been invited to a cocktail party where you'll get to talk with the most important leaders in your field. You're excited and ready to impress them. But when you arrive, there are no chairs. You have to stand the entire time. Then you find out it will last for 6 hours—no breaks, no leaving early. When you finally get home, you collapse onto your couch. You're thirsty, but you're too exhausted to get up for a glass of water. You don't have the strength to pick up the TV remote." This is how Gregg, a RECOVER adult participant, describes his experience living with Long COVID. While the party is just one tiring night for some people, the exhaustion can feel never-ending for those with Long COVID.

Gregg got COVID-19 in 2021, and after that, he experienced extreme tiredness and post-exertional malaise (PEM). PEM means feeling much worse after doing even the smallest tasks, and it doesn't go away with rest. After 4 weeks, Gregg wondered if he had Long COVID and searched online for

answers. It took another 6 weeks for his doctor to better understand that his symptoms were likely due to Long COVID. While looking for a Long COVID specialist, Gregg found RECOVER. As he learned more, he realized that his life was changing. "At the time, I had no idea how drastic that change would be."

Gregg works full-time as an editor at a music publishing house and can do his job from home. But he had to leave his part-time job as Director of Music Ministries at a church because it was too physically demanding. Even simple chores like taking out the trash leave him needing an hour of rest. His fatigue and PEM are so severe that going to parties, dinners, or family gatherings—whether at home or somewhere else—has become nearly impossible.

Despite the challenges and changes that Long COVID has brought to Gregg's life, he stays positive and finds ways to manage his condition. His company lets him work from home, which has made a big difference. He feels blessed for what he can do, like work remotely, sing in a community chorus, and participate in RECOVER. Still, Gregg knows that feeling grateful can be complicated. When he speaks about his gratitude despite having a condition that makes everyday life so challenging, some people wonder what he means and ask, "Huh?" But for him, gratitude comes from the flexibility to manage his Long COVID. Though his life is "smaller" now—with fewer activities and less time spent with friends or family—he remains hopeful. Every step forward in RECOVER brings researchers closer to finding answers about Long COVID, and that gives him a reason to keep going.



YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Thanks to you, we're making important discoveries that help us gain a better understanding of Long COVID. The infographic below shows how many tests adult and pediatric cohort participants have done. As the study continues, these numbers will grow. We encourage you to continue completing study activities so we can make a big difference together.

SYMPTOM SURVEYS

These surveys ask about how you are feeling. Everyone completes the surveys, whether you've had COVID or not.



116,572 Adult **20,806 Pediatric**

LABORATORY RESULTS

Lab tests study the samples taken during procedures like biopsies for adults or saliva for kids.



1,331,736 Adult **49,554 Pediatric**

OFFICE VISITS

Check-ups on your weight, height, blood pressure, heart rate, how your body reacts to standing up, and other tests.



41,439 Adult **6,300 Pediatric**

BLOOD SAMPLES

RECOVER researchers look closely at the cells in the blood for things that may be related to Long COVID.



39,370 Adult **25,034 Pediatric**

SMELL TESTS

This test helps RECOVER researchers understand your sense of smell using scratch and sniff cards.



6,056 Adult

CHEST SCANS

This test uses x-rays to see if your lungs are healthy or if you have trouble breathing.



4,609 Adult

FLEXIBILITY TESTS

This test looks at how far your fingers, thumbs, elbows, knees, and spine can bend.



3,983 Pediatric

THINKING TESTS

A checkup for your thinking skills, like memory, focus, and problem-solving, to see how well your brain is working.



4,400 Pediatric

UNDERSTANDING THE RESEARCH

The following are summaries of research papers that discuss the risk of developing Long COVID as related to one's sex, race, and ethnicity.

Sex Differences

A RECOVER study looked at whether a person's sex at birth affects their risk of developing Long COVID. To do this, researchers studied a large group of people enrolled in the RECOVER adult cohort. They found that:

- Females were more likely to have Long COVID symptoms than males
- Among females, the risk of getting Long COVID changed based on age, pregnancy status during COVID, and if they had gone through menopause
- The risk of getting Long COVID was higher in females ages 40–54 years and females who had not gone through menopause
- Females who had already gone through menopause were not at a higher risk compared to males

More research is needed to understand why differences in sex at birth may put someone at higher risk of experiencing the long-term effects of COVID. Knowing this and understanding which hormones play a role in Long COVID risk could help researchers develop treatments and ways to prevent Long COVID.

Read the full paper on Long COVID and sex:
recoverCOVID.info/SexDiff-Summer2025

Racial and Ethnic Differences

A RECOVER study looked at how a child's race or ethnicity might affect their chances of developing long-term health problems after getting COVID-19. Researchers compared the electronic health records (EHRs) of children who were diagnosed with COVID-19 or had a positive COVID-19 test to those who never tested positive. The study found that children with COVID-19 were more likely to develop many health problems weeks or months after getting COVID-19 than those who never had it. These problems included trouble breathing, feeling very tired (fatigue), mental health problems, and many more.

This study shows that long-term health problems in children and teens after COVID-19 may be different between racial and ethnic groups. This can help doctors better understand and treat Long COVID in young people who are more likely to get it.

Read the full paper on Long COVID and racial and ethnic differences in young people:
recoverCOVID.info/RacialEthnicDiff-Summer2025



R3 Seminar Recap: Sex Differences in Long COVID

On March 11, 2025, RECOVER researchers shared findings on how a person's sex may affect their risk of developing Long COVID during the RECOVER Research Review (R3) Seminar Series. The monthly virtual webinar featured **Dr. Dimpy Shah**, University of Texas Health Science Center co-investigator, and **Dr. Nora Singer**, MetroHealth Medical Center PI.

View the recording:

recoverCOVID.info/R3Vid-Summer2025

View recordings of past R3 Seminars or register for future R3 Seminars:

recoverCOVID.info/R3-Summer2025



Dr. Dimpy Shah



Dr. Nora Singer

Share Your Thoughts!



recoverCOVID.info/NewsletterFeedback

We want to learn more about you! Fill out this short contact form to 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.

