

# COVID-19

## LONG COVID RESOURCE GUIDE



## What is long COVID?



While most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks, some continue to have symptoms—or develop new ones—after their initial recovery. The technical term for this is Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 (PASC), or simply “long COVID.” People with long COVID are often called “long-haulers.” A person of any age who has had COVID-19 can later develop a post-virus condition.

People commonly report experiencing different combinations of the following symptoms four or more weeks after initial infection with COVID-19:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Joint or muscle pain
- Tiredness or fatigue
- Change in smell or taste
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities
- Mood changes
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating
- Rash
- Diarrhea
- Chest or stomach pain
- Sleep problems
- Headache
- Fever
- Fast-beating or pounding heart
- Dizziness on standing
- Pins-and-needles feeling
- Changes in menstrual period cycle
- Cough

For further information on long COVID symptoms, visit [Post-COVID Conditions | CDC](#).

## What to do if you believe you have symptoms of long COVID



Contact your Primary Care Manager (PCM) if you think you or a loved one may have a persistent post-COVID condition four weeks after initial COVID infection. For tips and a checklist on preparing for this appointment, visit [CDC Tips: Post-Covid Healthcare Provider Appointment](#).

## Veterans Health Administration (VA)



In October 2021, the VA launched an extensive, multi-faceted approach to better understand the long COVID experience and how the VA can support Veterans suffering from it. To learn more, participate in an interview or join the VA long COVID community of practice, please [email](#). Find more information at [Long COVID Archives - VAntage Point](#).

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## Managing long COVID

Having a post-COVID condition can be challenging, especially when there are few or no immediate answers or solutions. Taking an active role in understanding your experience and being mindful of your physical and emotional well-being can play an important role in managing long COVID.



### JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Reading and listening about the experiences of other people with a post-COVID condition and reflecting on how these experiences may be similar or different than your own can help confirm you are not alone.

The CDC recommends the following online support groups:

- [Survivor Corps](#)
- [Body Politic](#) (includes Facebook support groups)
- [Children's support group](#)



### STRESS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Experts are still determining which types of medications or treatments can help to relieve the effects of post-COVID conditions. However, there are established ways people can manage the stress associated with a post-COVID condition.

- Take a break from watching, reading or listening to news, including social media.
- Take care of your body:
  - Take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or practice mindfulness
  - Focus on nutrition and try to eat healthy, well balanced meals
  - Get plenty of sleep and exercise
- Connect with others

For further strategies on managing stress, visit the [CDC website](#) for an interactive tool to help discover multiple resources to help manage stress and support emotional health.

### PHYSICAL WELL-BEING



Physical activity can aid in recovery and alleviate many symptoms associated with long COVID.



### NUTRITION

Proper nutrition may alleviate many symptoms associated with long COVID. Try tips such as:

- Add healthy fats found in avocados, nuts, seeds, salmon and tuna.
- Cut sodium by avoiding processed food and replacing salt with herbs or no-salt spices.
- Increase fiber by including vegetables, beans, or peas in your salad
- Aim for a variety of colors on your plate by adding herbs and veggies to your meals.



### BREATHING EXERCISES

- Lie on your back and bend your knees so your feet are resting on the bed.
- Close your lips and breathe in deeply through your nose.
- Slowly exhale through your nose.
  - Continue this for one minute. If you are able to complete this exercise without feeling out of breath then move on to deep breathing on your side for one minute and then your stomach for one minute.



### KEEP MOVING

Movement heals the body and restores the mind and helps build endurance and strength. Find help with recovery and healing from long COVID at [Johns Hopkins Corona Virus Rehabilitation Resource](#).

