

What is long COVID?



Most people recover completely from COVID-19 and return to normal health.

The virus first emerged at the end of 2019. There is still limited knowledge on the potential long-term health outcomes of having been infected by COVID-19.

This is now an important area of international scientific research.

Long COVID is a term used to describe COVID-19 symptoms which continue for longer than four weeks after the initial infection.

Ongoing symptoms can vary. Fatigue and the ability to concentrate are commonly reported.

Check with your doctor before assuming your symptoms are due to COVID-19.

What are the symptoms of long COVID?

Reported symptoms include:

- Fatigue and tiredness
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Anxiety and low mood
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating, cognitive impairment or 'brain fog'
- Poor quality sleep

Long COVID appears to be more common among people who had severe COVID-19 symptoms when they first got sick. However, it can also affect those who initially had mild or moderate symptoms.

For more information on long COVID go to [healthnavigator.org.nz](https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz)

The best way to avoid getting long COVID is to be fully vaccinated (including your booster dose).

What are the treatments for long COVID-19?

There is no specific treatment for prolonged COVID-19 symptoms.

Monitor your symptoms. Do what you can to soothe them. Seek help from your GP or healthcare team if new symptoms arise or your symptoms worsen.

If you feel anxious, you can speak with a trained counsellor any time of the day - **free call or text 1737**

Online support groups for people experiencing long COVID:

- Facebook group 'New Zealand Covid Long-Haulers' or tinyurl.com/3f3wdr8p and
- Twitter @LongCovidNZ

If you've had COVID-19 but you still don't feel better after your isolation period.

It's not uncommon to have symptoms for up to four weeks. This is not necessarily long COVID.

You might find that you're sleeping a lot. Or you feel unsteady on your feet. Maybe standing for long periods is difficult.

COVID-19 can also affect your ability to concentrate and your memory.

These symptoms are most likely to be part of your body's natural response to fighting a viral infection.

You need to give your body time to heal. Don't try to do too much. Rest. Rest. Rest.

If your symptoms get worse call your GP, iwi health provider or Healthline on 0800 358 5453

If you or a family member becomes very unwell, has difficulty breathing or feels unsafe, immediately call 111

You'll find useful resources on how to manage your recovery from COVID-19 at healthnavigator.org.nz and at covid19wellingtonregion.health.nz