Long-COVID Facts

Long-COVID is defined as experiencing long-term effects after an infection of COVID-19.

- Affects 1 in 5 adults who have had COVID-19 in the last year
- Impacts people of all ages regardless of their health status
- Is considered a disability under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557

Impact of Long-COVID

Long-COVID symptoms present differently for each person and occur with varying degrees of severity.

This condition often leads to a drastic change in ability to function, which can vary from day-to-day.

The symptoms are often unpredictable and can lead to feeling a loss of control while also trying to continue forward with their life.

The common symptoms and challenges are listed below, however, do not fully capture all Long-COVID experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Symptoms</th>
<th>Common Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td>Exacerbation of other medical conditions, decreased ability to be active, need for more breaks, need for more time to complete tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatigue, body aches, pain, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, heart palpitations</td>
<td>Difficulty scheduling and planning, forgetting conversations, needing reminders to complete tasks, slower talking, losing track of conversations</td>
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<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>Increased sleeping, crying, isolation and self-criticism; not engaging in previously enjoyed activities, fear of leaving the house, changes in social engagement, becoming easily overwhelmed</td>
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<td>Brain fog, word finding and memory problems, difficulty concentrating</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety, depression, trauma, isolation, grief, identity changes, relationship distress</td>
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I’m doing the best I can to function and survive, even though:

- I’m grieving the change in my health, ability to work, relationships, and future.
- Long-COVID symptom variation prevents me from planning far in advance and having a consistent routine. That can feel overwhelming, chaotic, and dysfunctional.
- Many of my Long-COVID symptoms are “invisible.” Other people can’t easily see them, but that doesn’t make them any less real.
- Managing physical symptoms is physically and emotionally taxing, which impacts my cognitive functioning and can impair my ability to advocate for appropriate care.
- The unknown of Long-COVID is exhausting and frustrating. There is still a lot for everyone to learn and understand about Long-COVID.

How can I be supportive?

**Practical and Physical**

- Supporting loved ones with Long-COVID includes listening to what might be most helpful to them specifically. Each person has specific needs and knows themselves best.
- Remind your loved one to take breaks and rest regularly, and more as needed.
- Help your loved one with tasks that require significant time and energy.
- Assist with scheduling and helping your loved one get to healthcare appointments.
- Attend healthcare appointments with your loved one and take notes.
- Help advocate for their best interest and values and aim to be their voice when they are unable to speak up.
- Help your loved one find information about Long-COVID and understand new information as it becomes available.

**Emotional**

- Listen and validate your loved one’s experience. Aim to be compassionate, understanding, and kind.
- Understand that your loved one might be easily overwhelmed and may not have the emotional capacity to take on additional stressors.
- Offer to do low-stress and enjoyable activities together, with flexibility for changing plans, postponing plans, and taking breaks. Ask your loved one what those activities might be for them.
- Encourage loved ones to engage in movement and stress management that works for them.
- Help them find additional avenues of social support, including groups, individual therapy, and ways to virtually connect with others.

Resources for More Information:

- [https://www.longcoviddios.org](https://www.longcoviddios.org)
- [https://www.wearebodypolitic.com/covid-19](https://www.wearebodypolitic.com/covid-19)