
COVID 19 LONG HAULER HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUME 1: IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

What you need to know

Most people who get COVID 19 fall into one of two groups. The majority have mild symptoms and recover in about 2 weeks. Those with more severe symptoms can take up to 6 weeks to recover.

Then there is a third group, who, after the acute phase, develop chronic symptoms that can last for months. These people suffer from “Long COVID,” and are dubbed “Long Haulers.” The National Institutes of Health are proposing a technical medical term for this: post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection, or PASC, in case you are curious. No formal definition of Long COVID has yet been established.

There does not seem to be any rhyme or reason to who develops Long COVID and who doesn't. Victims of Long COVID can be young or old, healthy or diagnosed with other illnesses, hospitalized or not. Tests no longer detect the virus in their systems (*meaning that there is no active disease*), but they still feel awful.

Some studies report this phenomenon in 50% to 80% of people who develop COVID 19.

Symptoms of Long COVID:

Overwhelming fatigue (easily #1), body aches, shortness of breath, diarrhea, difficulty concentrating (brain fog), inability to exercise, headache, and difficulty sleeping. Even the slightest exertion may produce exhaustion. Senses of smell and taste may not have returned yet. In addition, there may be depression, and a sense of PTSD for having had COVID.

Since the pandemic has only been a year in the making, medical science does not know how long these symptoms will continue in people, or why some people develop them and others do not.

The possibility exists that Long COVID may be the same as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), according to the NIAID. More research is being done on this.

Some theories as to what is going on:

- ongoing low-level inflammation in the brain
- an autoimmune condition attacking the brain
- decreased blood flow to the brain, due to abnormalities of the autonomic nervous system
- difficulty making enough energy molecules to satisfy the needs of the brain and body

On a positive note, our experts are hard at work to figure all of this out. Already, a new T-Cell DNA test may be able to confirm who has actually been infected, removing any doubt as to whether someone may or may not be a “long hauler.” Out of pocket cost for this is around \$150.00. Check the ABC News website for more.

Stay tuned. More to come as things progress.

Resources:

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-it-means-to-be-a-coronavirus-long-hauler/>, 3/5/21.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-tragedy-of-the-post-covid-long-haulers-2020101521173>, 3/5/21.

<https://health.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-information/covid-19-long-haulers.html>, 3/5/21.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/fda-authorizes-new-t-cell-test-that-could-be-game-changer-for-covid-19-long-haulers/ar-BB1ep3yk?ocid=spartan-ntp-feeds>, 3/9/21.