



Long COVID at the UPMC Post-COVID Recovery Clinic



Most people who have COVID-19 recover in a few days or weeks, but some people have health problems that last for weeks, months, or years. When symptoms last for 3 months or more after an initial COVID-19 infection, it can be diagnosed as Long COVID. It can happen even if the illness caused mild or no symptoms, but it is more common if your illness was serious. Long COVID is a relatively new illness, and we are continuously learning more about it. While the cause is still not known, researchers are getting closer to finding an answer.

- Long COVID is not one illness. It is a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems that people experience after being infected with the COVID-19 virus.
- There have been more than 200 symptoms linked to Long COVID.
- There is no test that determines if your symptoms/condition is due to a prior COVID-19 infection.

In 2020, the UPMC Post-COVID Recovery Clinic was created at the UPMC Comprehensive Lung Center (CLC). At this clinic, our experts are working to better understand the virus and provide support for people who continue to experience difficulties in the weeks or even months after their diagnosis. We also offer access to the latest treatments and trials for people who have ongoing symptoms after a COVID-19 infection.

Can Long COVID be prevented?

The best way to prevent Long COVID is to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19 in the first place. Get the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters when eligible.

Do people recover from Long COVID?

Different studies have found different results. In one study, about 23% of people who got COVID-19 before vaccines were available still had symptoms after 6 months. After a year, 19% of people still had symptoms. After 2 years, 17% of people still had symptoms. We know that some people get better, but others may have difficulties that last a lifetime.

Other Common Questions About Long Covid

- Why do some people get hit by COVID-19 so much harder than others?
- Is it ever going to end?
- What can I do to get better?

There are no clear answers just yet. There are ongoing studies looking into the causes of Long COVID, and potential treatments are taking place right now.

Long COVID Support Group

Our Long COVID support group is run by speech therapists from the UPMC Rehabilitation Institute. Meetings are held on Microsoft Teams, usually on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 7 to 8 p.m. Each meeting starts with a short lesson on a specific post-COVID topic. After that, there is a discussion where people can share their personal experiences.

To join, send an email to covidsupportgroup@upmc.edu. You will get an invite to the Microsoft Teams meeting and be added to the email list for future meetings.

Before each meeting, you will get an email with information about the topic for that month. There is no commitment required. You can come to the meetings as often or as little as you want.

Research Opportunities

If you are interested in learning more about research opportunities for Long COVID and/or post-COVID conditions, let your provider at the Post-COVID Recovery Clinic know. They can let researchers know that you are interested, and they can contact you with more information. Remember, research is different from regular medical care.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s RECOVER Initiative

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) initiative is funding research to understand, predict, treat, and prevent Long COVID. Thousands of people across the U.S. have enrolled in RECOVER studies which are working to better understand Long COVID diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

- To learn more about RECOVER, visit RECOVERcovid.org.
- If you have any questions, visit RECOVERcovid.org/contact-us and fill out a short form.
- To find out if you are eligible to join a study, visit Studies.RECOVERcovid.org/join.