



**Medical
Blueprints**

POST-ACUTE COVID SYNDROME: COVID LONG- HAULERS OR LIFERS? REPORT #2820

BACKGROUND: Coronaviruses are a type of virus which can cause disease, and there are many different kinds. The newest coronavirus is called COVID-19. Researchers know that this virus is spread through droplets released into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The droplets generally do not travel more than a few feet, and they fall to the ground (or onto surfaces) in a few seconds. It appears that symptoms are showing up in people within 14 days of exposure to the virus. Some patients continue to experience symptoms related to COVID after the acute phase of infection. They call it post-acute COVID syndrome. The syndrome appears to affect those with mild as well as moderate-to-severe disease.

(Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus> and [https://www.idsociety.org/covid-19-real-time-learning-network/disease-manifestations--complications/post-covid-syndrome/#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20reported%20symptoms,difficulty%20with%20concentration%20\(28%25\).](https://www.idsociety.org/covid-19-real-time-learning-network/disease-manifestations--complications/post-covid-syndrome/#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20reported%20symptoms,difficulty%20with%20concentration%20(28%25).))

LINGERING EFFECTS: Many coronavirus patients suffer symptoms such as breathlessness, excessive fatigue, and muscle aches for months after being treated at a hospital. Though most patients reported improvements in initial symptoms such as fever, cough, and sense of smell, a large number still had quality of life issues, researchers reported. They struggled to carry out daily tasks such as washing, dressing, and going back to work. "This research helps to describe what many coronavirus patients have been telling us. They are still breathless, tired, and not sleeping well months after admission," said David Arnold, a doctor from North Bristol NHS Trust. However, Dixie Harris, MD with Intermountain Medical Center says, "Newer reports say less than 50% of infected patients (hospitalized and non-hospitalized) and including college-age patients have ongoing symptoms."

(Source: <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200825/study-finds-some-covid-19-symptoms-last-for-months>)

LOOKING AHEAD TO LONG-TERM ANSWERS: One common theory about patients with long-term COVID symptoms is that the virus possibly remains in their bodies in some small form. Another theory is their immune system continues to overreact even though the infection has passed. The answer is not clear as to whether the symptoms of COVID can cause permanent damage. Health care providers don't know how many of these symptoms are permanent, or if there is permanent damage being done. Some patients who have been seriously ill from COVID develop acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), which can permanently scar their lungs. However, it's not clear if there is any scarring for long-haulers who have respiratory issues but not at the severe level of ARDS. Other patients with long-term loss of smell and taste worry about permanent damage, too. Experts believe that the loss of smell and taste won't be permanent. For most people, there will likely be resolution, but there isn't a clear answer as to how long this will take.

(Source: <https://health.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-information/covid-19-long-haulers.html>)

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