Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Long-term effects of COVID-19

27 June 2022

Most people who get COVID-19 will have symptoms for a short time and then get well within a few weeks. The time it takes to get well from COVID-19 is different for each person. This depends on how sick you were with COVID-19. It can also depend on whether you have any other existing health conditions.

There are some people who experience long-term health problems after having COVID-19. Sometimes COVID-19 causes a person to feel unwell for many months after the initial illness. This is called 'long COVID'. Long COVID can last for many weeks and months, even after a person no longer has the virus.

Long COVID is more likely in people who had severe COVID-19. However, even people who had a mild COVID-19 infection and did not need to go to hospital can still develop long COVID.

Symptoms of long COVID

Long COVID can cause a wide range of symptoms and may not affect everyone in the same way. Symptoms can continue after infection, or they can come back after a person has recovered from COVID-19.

The most common symptoms and conditions reported include:

- tiredness
- difficulty breathing
- a persistent cough
- chest pain
- joint pain
- not enough energy to exercise
- fever
- headaches
- problems with memory and difficulty thinking clearly ('brain fog')
- depression or anxiety.

Preventing long COVID

The best way to prevent long COVID is to protect yourself against being infected with the COVID-19 virus.

Vaccination is the best way to reduce the risks of COVID-19.

Research suggests that people who are vaccinated against COVID-19 are less likely to report long COVID symptoms than people who are unvaccinated.

For more information

If you tested positive for COVID-19 more than a few weeks ago, and you are still feeling unwell, speak to your doctor.

For more information, visit health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages, or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. Select option 8 for free interpreting services.