

Mental Health and Long COVID



What is Long COVID?

Long COVID is when a person still has symptoms many months after getting COVID-19.

Some people with Long COVID have physical health problems, such as:



Trouble breathing



Feeling weak and tired



Brain fog (trouble thinking)



A cough



Heart, lung, kidney, or brain problems

And some people with Long COVID have mental and emotional issues, such as:



Anxiety



Depression or changes in mood



Trouble thinking or remembering



Sleep problems

Why does Long COVID cause mental health problems?

Here are 3 possible reasons why:

The COVID-19 virus may make changes in the brain, immune system (our defense system against sickness), or other organs.

People may feel distress from having COVID-19, even if they were not very sick or in the hospital.

People may feel hopeless about their symptoms, which feel like they will never stop (like breathing problems or feeling weak and tired).

Caring for your mental health with Long COVID

We all need our sleep – make yours a priority. Go to bed and wake up around the same time each day. Some apps, such as SleepScore, Sleep++, and Pillow, can help you build a healthy sleep schedule.



SleepScore



Sleep++



Pillow



Making sure you get enough sleep can help improve your mood and memory

Eat healthy foods – you know the drill: lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Try to eat less fast food, salt, and sugar as these may cause your blood sugar to rise and fall. Low blood sugar can cause sleep problems and anxious feelings.



Move your body! Be active for at least 20 - 30 minutes a day. Try going for a walk, bike ride, yoga, or even yard work. When you are active, your body and brain make chemicals that help improve your mood and energy levels. This can also help with restlessness and sleep problems.



What do you like to do? Walking, gardening, or cooking? Make time for these things. When you are enjoying yourself, you are focused on the present moment and worry less about the future. Some people even feel a break from their symptoms!



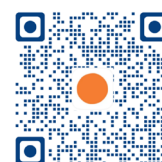
We are social creatures! Reach out to friends, family, and your community (virtually or in-person). Meeting regularly can give you something to look forward to each week. When people feel more connected to others, they feel less anxiety and depression.



Kick the 24-hour phone scrolling to the curb. We want to stay informed on COVID-19, but too much information can make us feel worse. Many smart phones let you measure how much time you spend in social media apps. Try to lower how much time you spend scrolling on your phone. You might be surprised how good you feel with less information spinning around in your head!



Ever tried meditation? It is a way to quiet your mind and calm your body – and it works. It is about living in the present moment – not the past or future. It can help us feel better about ourselves, feel less anxiety and depression, and even cope with pain. Try a meditation app such as Headspace or Calm.



Scan with your phone to see these apps.

Need support right now? People are here to help:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call 800-273-TALK (8255) for free 24/7 support. Call 888-628-9454 for support in Spanish.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text “MHFA” to 741-741 for free 24/7 crisis counseling
- **Lifeline Crisis Chat:** Visit www.crisischat.org to talk online with crisis centers around the United States
- **The Trevor Project:** Call 866-488-7386 or text “START” to 678-678 for mental health support specialized for the LGBTQ+ community
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline:** Call 800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 667-46 to connect with a trained crisis counselor

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