

How to identify Long COVID in your patients.

When patients have symptoms that may be Long COVID, you can help make sense of them.

Long COVID shows up differently for everyone.

- Long COVID can be difficult to describe or resemble other illnesses, especially if your patient has preexisting health conditions. Symptoms can change over time.
- Long COVID symptoms typically impact a person's daily routine, or can be disabling to the point that they can't work or need accommodations at their jobs.
- Some people's symptoms get worse after mental or physical effort. Standing up, being in a warm environment or trying to push through their fatigue can make them feel worse.
- People living with Long COVID simply don't feel like themselves or have been generally unwell, and it's interfering with daily routines.

Long COVID symptoms usually start within three months of a COVID-19 infection. There are over 200 unique symptoms, but some of the most common include:

- **Extreme fatigue or post-exertional malaise.** Small things like running a quick errand, walking up a flight of stairs or reading a book can take up all physical and mental energy for the day. It's more intense than just being tired.
- **Brain fog.** Trouble focusing or remembering, scattered and unfocused thinking, and sometimes anxiety or depression that can make it hard to sleep.
- **Respiratory problems.** A lasting cough, chest pain, or difficulty breathing.
- **Feverish feelings.** General aches and pains, chills and fever, often lasting for a while. Symptoms tend to get worse after mental or physical effort or changes in temperature.

People may also experience:

- Changes in smell and/or taste
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Headaches
- Stomach pains
- Joint and muscle pain
- Menstrual cycle changes

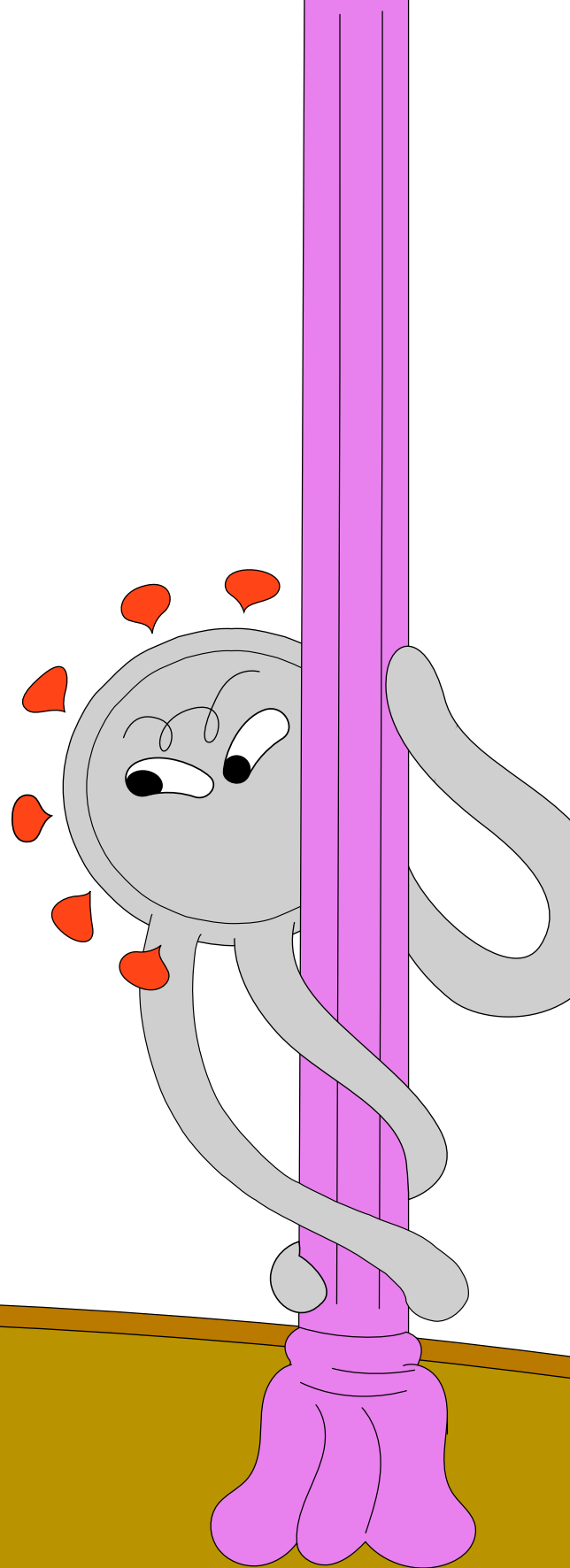


Ask your patients when they last tested positive for COVID-19 or were ill.

This can create a timeline and help make sense of their symptoms. There is no definitive test for Long COVID, but ruling out other conditions or tying their current symptoms to COVID-19 can narrow it down.

How you can help patients who may have Long COVID:

- Don't discount Long COVID as a possible diagnosis, especially if your patient has had a recent COVID-19 illness.
- Consider preexisting conditions and ask your patient if they have experienced worsening symptoms.
- Look for patterns, including symptoms that change over time or worsen after exertion.
- Consider how their symptoms have affected their daily lives.
- Rule out other conditions while recognizing that their symptoms may not point to a single diagnosis.



Learn more about Long COVID at
doh.wa.gov/long-covid-providers