

Long COVID

*The importance of GP assessment
and investigative pathology tests*





What is long COVID?

Most people infected with COVID-19 fully recover within a few weeks, however, a NSW-based study of 3,000 COVID patients showed 5% continued to experience symptoms beyond 12 weeks.¹

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines “long COVID”, or post COVID-19 condition, as a group of symptoms that extend beyond 12 weeks from COVID infection and are present for at least 2 months.²

Examples of these potentially overlapping and intermittent symptoms that impact on everyday functioning include fatigue, shortness of breath and cognitive dysfunction.

Common symptoms of long COVID

If you are still experiencing any of these commonly reported symptoms 12+ weeks post-COVID infection, it is important to see your GP for assessment, investigative testing and ongoing care.³





Respiratory / ENT and cardiovascular symptoms

- Breathlessness
- Cough
- Cardiovascular symptoms i.e. chest tightness, chest pain, palpitations
- Tinnitus
- Earache
- Sore throat
- Dizziness
- Loss of taste and/or smell
- Nasal congestion



Generalised and neurological symptoms

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Pain
- Cognitive impairment ('brain fog', loss of concentration or memory issues)
- Headache
- Sleep disturbance
- Pins and needles and numbness
- Dizziness
- Delirium (in older populations)
- Mobility impairment
- Visual disturbance
- Symptoms of depression
- Symptoms of anxiety
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder



Gastrointestinal symptoms

- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Diarrhoea
- Weight loss and reduced appetite



Musculoskeletal / skin symptoms

- Joint pain
- Muscle pain
- Skin rashes
- Hair loss





How can I get help if I think I have long COVID?

Booking an appointment with your regular GP is the best place to start if you believe you have symptoms consistent with long COVID.

Clinical assessment of patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of long COVID can be difficult, as symptoms can be varied and overlapping.

To help in their assessment, your GP will order a series of pathology tests for you including baseline investigations (i.e. full blood count, kidney and liver function tests, iron studies, thyroid function, etc). If you present with respiratory and cardiovascular symptoms your doctor may order tests including troponin and Holter monitoring.

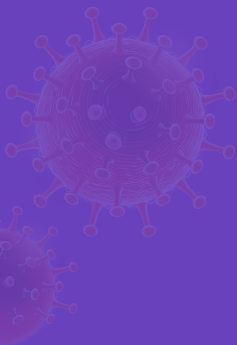
These targeted pathology investigations are essential in supporting your doctor's assessment if you present with symptoms indicative of long COVID.

Where can I have my pathology tests?

Once you have seen your doctor, you can attend any Clinical Labs collection centre with your pathology request form.



To find the Clinical Labs collection centre nearest you, visit clinicallabs.com.au/location or scan the QR code.



References

1. Liu B, Jayasundara D, Pye V, Dobbins T, Dore GJ, Matthews G, et al. Whole of population-based cohort study of recovery time from COVID-19 in New South Wales Australia. (2666-6065 (Electronic)).
2. WHO. A clinical case definition of post COVID-19 condition by a Delphi consensus, 6 October 2021 2021 [Available from: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Post_COVID-19_condition-Clinical_case_definition-2021.1].
3. Shah W, Hillman T, Playford ED, Hishmeh L. Managing the long term effects of covid-19: summary of NICE, SIGN, and RCGP rapid guideline. *BMJ*. 2021;372:n136.



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