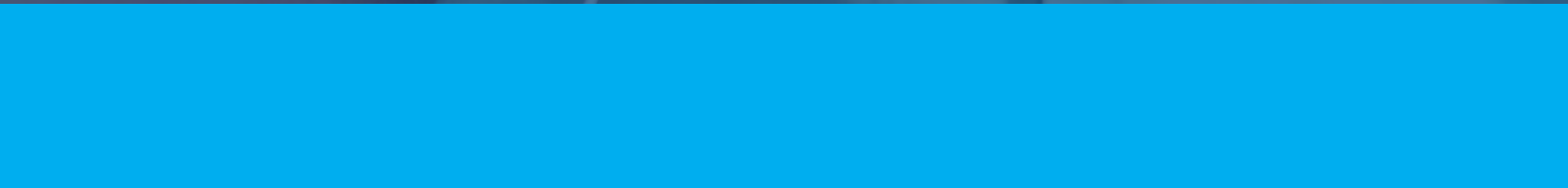


ALLIANT HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Long COVID Self-Care Toolkit

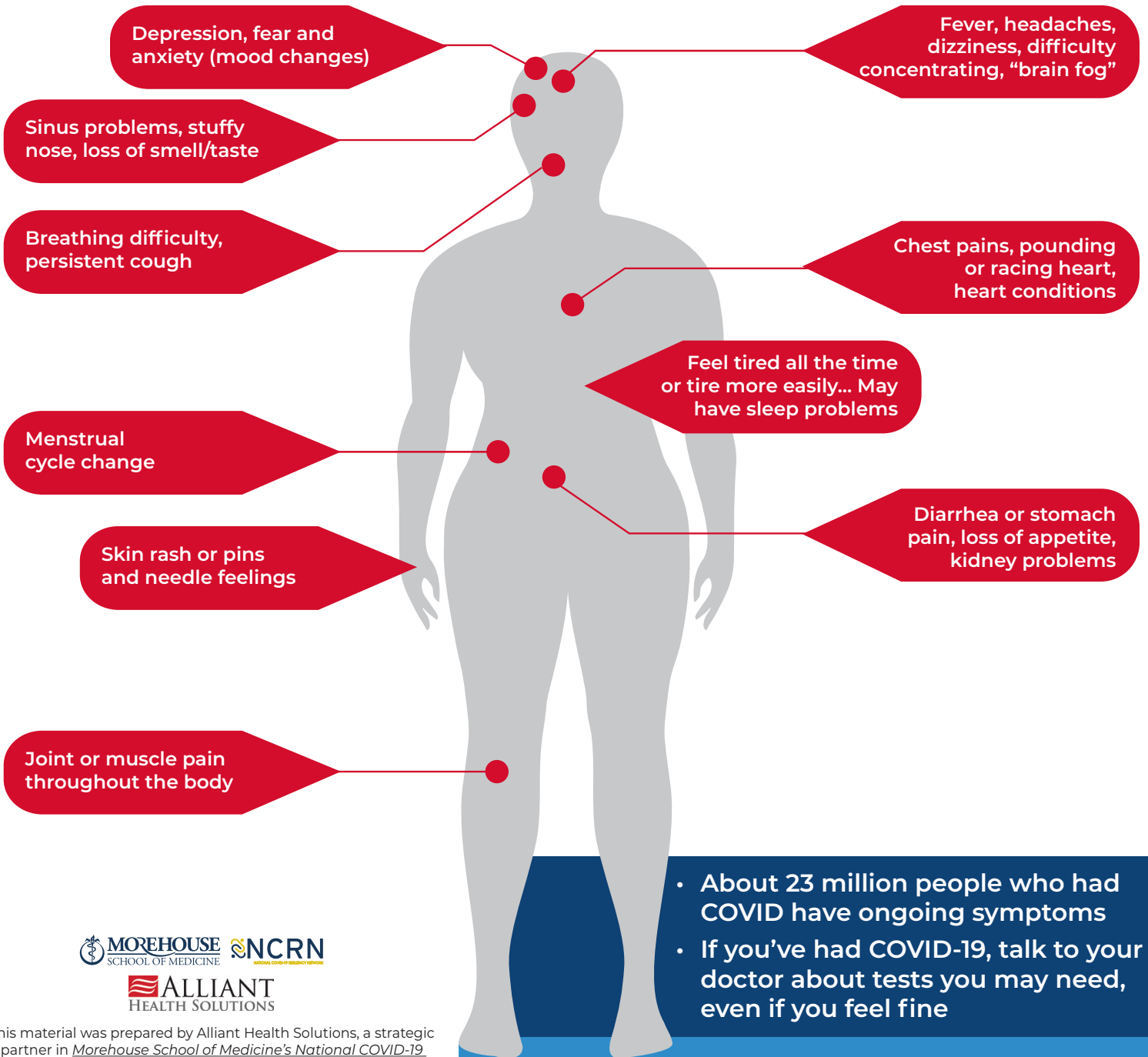




Long COVID on the Body

Are You Experiencing These Symptoms After Having COVID-19?

“Long COVID,” “Post COVID Syndrome” or “Post COVID Condition” are all terms used to describe ongoing symptoms that remain four or more weeks after being infected with COVID-19. People who have this condition, frequently called “long haulers,” commonly report experiencing different combinations of the following symptoms:



- About 23 million people who had COVID have ongoing symptoms
- If you’ve had COVID-19, talk to your doctor about tests you may need, even if you feel fine



This material was prepared by Alliant Health Solutions, a strategic partner in *Morehouse School of Medicine’s National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN)*. The funding was made possible through a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. The National COVID-19 Resiliency Network logo are service marks of Morehouse School of Medicine.

To learn more or to find a Post COVID Care Center (PCCC) in your state go to <https://www.survivorcorps.com/pccc>

Self-Management of Long COVID

Managing Symptoms

Long COVID-19 is the common name for post-COVID syndrome. People with long COVID experience new, returning, or ongoing symptoms more than four weeks after getting COVID-19. Research on long COVID is new and continuing, and treatments and therapies are still being developed. Below is a list of the most recognized symptoms and treatments of long COVID at this time. This is not a complete list.



Symptom:

Fatigue is commonly reported. It can be severe and is treated as [Myalgic Encephalomyelitis \(ME\)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome \(CFS\)](#).

Things to do:

- **Pace yourself.** Try to break tasks into smaller chunks and alternate between easier and harder activities. Frequent, short breaks are better.
- **Plan.** Consider the best time of day to do certain activities based on your energy levels. Rest before you become exhausted.
- **Increase activity gradually.** Start with short increments (10 minutes today) and add a little each day (11 minutes tomorrow.) Do simple strength activities.
- **Don't stop. Don't push.** Keep doing things that make you feel a little breathless, but use supports and take breaks, even if you are having a good day. Your muscles will weaken if you stop using them, but pushing too hard can lead to a crash or relapse.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the treatment of ME/CFS.

Symptom:

Mood and Mental Health. Any chronic condition or illness can deflate our mood and cause concern. Staying as positive and mentally healthy as possible will improve physical health.

Things to do:

- **Be kind to yourself.** Give yourself grace on days that are worse than others. It is part of recovery.
- **Keep in touch with family and friends.** Connections and support are important.
- **Make and keep a daily routine,** ensuring you provide time for rest and activity. Stay as active as possible to help release endorphins and improve your mood.
- **Take “bad news” breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories, including social media.** Hearing about the COVID-19 pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Seek professional support.** Talk to a therapist or physician about medications or other mood-improving activities.

Symptom:

Brain fog, memory or thinking problems. Many people suffer from brain fog while recovering from long COVID. You may find it hard to concentrate or remember things, your thinking may be slower than usual, or you may feel fuzzy or forgetful.

Things to do:

- **Set reminders.** Use your Alexa or Google Home device, phone calendar, text reminders or a calendar to remind yourself of things to do and events.
- **Make a plan.** Before approaching any new or complicated problem or situation, break it down into steps, and keep checking your plan as you follow it.
- **Exercise.** Start gradually, and don't overdo it. Check with your doctor before taking up a new exercise plan.
- **Limit alcohol intake or don't drink at all.** The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults of legal drinking age limit alcohol intake to two drinks a day for men and one drink or less a day for women. [Click here for drink size definition](#)
- **Get enough sleep.** View the [Sleep Foundation's chart](#) of recommended sleep hours based on age.
- **Brain stimulation.** Participate in social activities, learn something new, and practice mindfulness.

Symptom:

Joint or muscle pain. Severe viral infections such as COVID-19 can cause joint and muscle pain or soreness, which can be in a specific area or spread more widely.

Things to do:

- **Flexibility exercises.** Exercises like stretching, yoga and tai chi, and strength exercises like light weightlifting, incline or stair walking, or resistance bands can help. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise plan.

Resources:

- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/news/coronavirus-and-your-health/long-covid#Heading10>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html>

Self-Management of long COVID

Tracking, Learning and Advocating

Long COVID is the common name for post-COVID syndrome. People with long COVID experience new, returning or ongoing symptoms more than four weeks after getting COVID-19. Research on long COVID is new and continuing, and treatments and therapies are still being developed. Below is a list of tips for managing long COVID.



Things to do to advocate for yourself, learn about and track your conditions:

1. **Track your symptoms** using an app, like The SIGN Symptom Diary (Download it from [Google Play](#) or [Apple App Store](#)), a calendar or another type of symptom tracker, your Alexa or Google home device, phone calendar, text reminders, paper calendar, or paper tracker (like the one in this packet.) **Share it with your care provider.**
2. **Advocate for yourself.** If your physician does not hear you, consider getting another opinion.
3. **Talk to your physician** about the need for tests for heart, kidney or other potential problems. If exhaustion or poor sleep is an issue, ask about a sleep study.
Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise plan.
4. **Consider visiting a Post-COVID Care Center (PCCC).** Find locations on the [PCCC website](#).
5. **Get vaccinated.** Some [research](#) shows that getting vaccinated may decrease symptoms and help protect from severe illness with reinfection.
6. **Locate a long COVID support group.**
7. **You know your body better than anyone else does. Listen to it.**

Long COVID Symptom Tracker

Name: _____ Month: _____, 20____

SYMPTOM	DAY																															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
PHYSICAL																																
Fatigue - mild																																
Fatigue - moderate																																
Fatigue - severe																																
Stomach issues/diarrhea																																
Heart pain or palpitations																																
Headache																																
Lack of Taste																																
Lack of Smell																																
Fever																																
Muscle or joint pain																																
Dizziness																																
Breathlessness																																
Hoarse																																
Fever																																
Other:																																
MOOD																																
Sad or depressed																																
Anxious																																
Felt good																																
Other:																																
THINKING																																
Brain fog																																
Forgetful																																
Difficulty concentrating																																
No problems																																
Other																																

SYMPTOM	DAY																															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
SOCIAL																																
Can't attend events																																
Can't do typical leisure activities																																
Don't want to or unable to visit with family/friends																																
Today, I wanted to _____ but was not able to.																																
Today, I was able to do _____ _____.																																
Today was better than yesterday.																																
Today was worse than yesterday.																																
Tomorrow I will _____ _____.																																
Notes:																																