




Patient Tips: Healthcare Provider Appointments for Post-COVID Conditions

Updated July 11, 2022

What You Need to Know

- Preparing for an appointment can make all the difference in getting the proper evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment.
- To help get the most out of appointments for post-COVID conditions, download the [Healthcare Appointment Checklist](#)  ([Español \[PDF – 72 KB\]](#)).
- Try to arrive early or log on a few minutes ahead of the appointment and ensure paperwork is completed on your appointment day.
- After visiting your healthcare provider, review your notes to prepare for your next appointment.

Before Your Appointment

If you think you or a loved one may have a post-COVID condition (new or persistent conditions occurring 4 or more weeks after initial infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19), taking a few steps to prepare for your meeting with a healthcare provider can make all the difference in getting the proper medical evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment. You play a vital role in helping healthcare providers understand your or your family member's symptoms and how they affect your daily life.

 **Printable Version:** [Preparing for Your Appointment](#)  | [Español \[PDF – 372 KB\]](#)

List Your Healthcare Providers

- **Prepare a list of your current and past healthcare providers and your current and past medical conditions, especially if you are seeing a new healthcare provider.**

Write Down Your History

- **Prepare a brief history** that summarizes your experience with COVID-19 and post-COVID conditions. For example, write down a list of the symptoms you think started after your COVID-19 infection:
 - the date of onset of original COVID-19 illness and/or positive COVID-19 test, if known
 - when your post-COVID condition symptoms started
 - a list of prior treatments and diagnostic tests related to your post-COVID symptoms (blood work, x-rays, etc.)
 - what makes your symptoms worse

- how the symptoms affect your activities, including challenges that effect daily living, working, attending school, etc.
- how often symptoms occur
- how you have been feeling
- try to describe examples of your best and worst days. Select your most important issues (sometimes referred to as “chief complaints”) and write them down

List Your Medications

- **Prepare a list of medications and supplements you are taking.** Most healthcare providers will ask you to provide this information at each appointment. Bringing your list with you will help keep track.

Talk with a Family Member or Friend

- **Consider discussing your appointment with a trusted family member or friend** immediately before and after you see your healthcare provider. This person can help you take notes and remember what was discussed at the appointment while it’s still fresh in your mind. If your healthcare provider’s office policy allows it, consider bringing them to your appointment with you.

What to Expect

The provider you meet with could be a doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or other type of healthcare professional. It may take more than one appointment to evaluate potential post-COVID symptoms and determine an accurate diagnosis to better manage and treat your symptoms. Your provider may ask questions about your medical history, current symptoms, and quality of life. Depending on your symptoms, they may run tests to determine a diagnosis and plan for treatment.

Healthcare providers are still learning about [post-COVID conditions](#). CDC continues to work to determine how common these long-term effects are, who is most likely to get them, how long the symptoms typically last, and whether symptoms eventually resolve.

During Your Appointment

On the day of your appointment, try to arrive a little early or, for telemedicine appointments, call in or log on a few minutes ahead of the appointment. If your provider is running late, you can use the time to make sure your paperwork or forms have been filled out and the front desk has your correct information. Everyone likes to be seen on time, but it’s important to remember that each patient should receive the same attention from the provider once it is their turn. The list below can help you during your appointment.

 **Printable Version:** [On the Day of Your Appointment](#)  | [Español \[PDF – 372 KB\]](#)

Bring Your List of Concerns

- Since appointment time is often limited, it will help to **make a list** of why you are coming in for an appointment. Start with your most concerning issues (sometimes called “chief complaints”).
- Focus on **talking to your provider** as this can be the most valuable part of the visit. If your provider still needs any of your past medical records, **ask to sign required forms** to give your permission to have these records sent.

Ask & Answer Questions

- **Ask questions**, starting with the most important ones. Don't hesitate to ask your healthcare provider to clarify the answers if they are not clear to you.
- Be prepared to **discuss your activity levels, what activities make your illness worse, and any medications** that seem to improve or worsen the symptoms.
- **Answer the provider's questions.** Explain how you feel. Be straightforward, and don't be embarrassed to talk about anything.
- Let your provider know if there have been any changes to your **prescribed medications and supplements**.

Know Your Next Steps

- Make sure you **understand the next steps**. Bring pencil and paper to write down instructions or use your hand-held device for notes. Repeat back what the provider has told you to check for understanding. (For example, you might ask: "So, I should go to the lab next week with this paperwork to get my blood drawn?"). Additional questions could include:
 - Will I need additional tests?
 - When and how will I get test results?
 - When should I return for another visit?

Ask for a Summary

- **Ask for an appointment summary.** You can also ask the provider to write down any instructions, medication names, etc., for you. If there are changes to your treatment plan, make sure you understand what to do. For new medication, ask why it is being given and what you should expect by taking this new medication.

After Your Appointment

If you have been diagnosed with a post-COVID condition or are waiting to hear back from your provider about a post-COVID conditions diagnosis, reviewing your appointment notes and preparing for your next one can help you get the most out of your appointments.

 **Printable Version:** [After Your Appointment](#)  | [Español](#)  [\[PDF – 370 KB\]](#)

Track Your Appointments

- **Make appointments** for follow up and any additional testing.
- **Record future appointments on your calendar.** Ask a friend or family member to put the appointment(s) on their calendars as well. Ask the provider's office if they will call or email you with an appointment reminder.

Work with Your Healthcare Provider

- If you are confused or don't remember something your provider said, **call the provider's office for clarification.**
- **Follow your provider's instructions** as closely as you can.

Document Your Experiences

- **Continue to record symptoms in a journal**, if possible. Some people with post-COVID conditions find it helpful to include:
 - whether symptoms have improved
 - which treatments have improved symptoms
 - any side effects

- any other new symptoms or changes
- Make a note to give your healthcare provider **feedback** about how recommended interventions have worked for you.
- Write down** any issues you did not have time to talk about at the last appointment.
- Keep track** of medications, vitamins, herbs, supplements, and over-the-counter drugs you take, using a current medications and supplements list.
- Remind your provider to **share any test results** if the expected window for receiving the results has passed.

Set Goals with Your Healthcare Provider

- Your provider may run tests that return normal results. This does not change the existence, severity, or importance of your symptoms or conditions. Healthcare providers and patients are encouraged to **set achievable goals through shared decision-making** and to approach treatment by focusing on specific symptoms or conditions.

Review the Healthcare Appointment Checklist

- Consider reviewing the [Healthcare Appointment Checklist for Post-COVID Conditions](#)  before your next appointment ([Español \[PDF – 72 KB\]](#)). Many instructions apply to follow-up appointments.

Healthcare Appointment Checklist for Post-COVID Conditions | COVID-19 |

Accession link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/post-covid-appointment/index.html>

This checklist is designed to help patients and caregivers get the most out of appointments with healthcare providers for post-COVID conditions.

Before the Appointment

- ☐ Ask the new provider's office if they need paperwork signed so your medical records can be sent to them directly.
- ☐ Keep a journal or a list for a week or two to document your activities, symptoms, their severity, and anything that made you feel better or worse.
- ☐ Prepare a brief report that summarizes your experience and symptoms and describes your best and worst days.
- ☐ Make a list of your current medications/supplements.
- ☐ Make a list of questions to ask your healthcare provider. Identify which ones are a priority for you (in case time is limited).
- ☐ Make a plan for remembering your conversation with your healthcare provider — e.g., taking notes or

During the Appointment

- ☐ Tell your provider the most important symptoms or issues you'd like to discuss.
- ☐ Answer the provider's questions.
- ☐ Share your medications/supplement list.
- ☐ Discuss your level of activity.
- ☐ Ask your own questions, starting with your priorities and needs.
- ☐ Make sure you understand the next steps, such as tests, follow-up, referrals, and future appointments.
- ☐ Ask for an appointment summary. If needed, ask the provider to write down or print out any instructions, medication names, or diagnoses.

After the Appointment

- ☐ Make appointments for follow up.
- ☐ Record future appointments, including tests, in your calendar. If others will go with you or drive you to future appointments, make sure the appointments are on their calendar too.
- ☐ Follow your provider's instructions to the best of your ability.
- ☐ Contact your provider's office with any questions or clarifications.
- ☐ Continue to record symptoms and keep your journal, so you can refer to updates or changes during your next appointment.
- ☐ Update and keep track of medications and supplements.

CHECKLIST

Healthcare Appointment Checklist for Post-COVID Conditions

[View PDF](#) 

[\[100 KB, 1 page\]](#)

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