



Caring for People with Post-COVID Conditions

Updated Sept. 1, 2022

This information is intended for a general audience. Healthcare professionals should see the [post-COVID conditions for healthcare providers page](#) for more detail information on management.



Having a post-COVID condition or supporting someone with a [post-COVID condition](#) can be challenging. It can be difficult to care for yourself or loved ones, especially when there are few or no immediate answers or solutions. However, there are ways to help relieve some of the additional burdens of experiencing or caring for someone with a new and unknown condition.

If you care for someone, remember to take steps to [protect yourself and others from COVID-19](#).

Children and Adolescents


Although post-COVID conditions appear to be less common in children and adolescents than in adults, long-term effects after COVID-19 do occur in children and adolescents. Young children may have trouble describing the problems they are experiencing.

If your child has a post-COVID condition that impacts their ability to attend school, complete schoolwork, or perform their usual activities, it may be helpful to discuss with your child's healthcare professional and school possible accommodations such as extra time on tests, scheduled rest periods throughout the day, a modified class schedule, etc. School administrators, school counselors, and school nurses can work with families and healthcare professionals to provide learning accommodations for children with post-COVID conditions, particularly those experiencing thinking, concentrating, or physical difficulties. You may also request similar accommodations for activities outside of school, such as day care, tutoring, sports, scouting, etc.

For more information, visit the [U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSERS\)'s Resource to Support Children, Students, Educators, Schools, Service Providers, and Families](#)  .

Understand Your Experience

Each person copes differently with a long-term illness, and there are different ways to manage the stress, anxiety, and uncertainty of a new illness. Some people find taking an active role in understanding their condition is a comfort for managing their ongoing illness:

- **Read about the experiences of other people with a post-COVID condition.**
Understanding other people's experiences with post-COVID conditions and reflecting on how these experiences may be similar or different than your own can help confirm you are not alone.
- **Contribute to ongoing scientific research.**
Participating in research studies can build a larger understanding of new and unknown illnesses. Information about enrolling in clinical trials related to COVID-19 can be found at [CombatCovid.hhs.gov](#) , and includes opportunities for persons with and without COVID-19.

- **Participate in specific long COVID research.**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is conducting a research project, called the RECOVER Initiative, to understand how people recover from a COVID-19 infection and why some people do not fully recover and develop long COVID or post-COVID conditions. Learn more about [Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery](#) [↗](#).

People experiencing post-COVID conditions may find different strategies to be helpful. If you are experiencing a post-COVID condition, you should engage in whatever [coping strategies](#) are best for your mental and physical health.

Ways to Cope with Stress

Experts are still determining which types of medications or treatments can help to relieve the effects of post-COVID conditions. However, there are established ways people can manage the stress associated with a post-COVID condition.

Here are some steps you can do to help [manage and cope with stress](#):

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including social media. Hearing about the COVID-19 pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, [meditate](#) [↗](#), or [practice mindfulness](#) [↗](#).
 - [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals](#).
 - [Exercise](#), if you can. Listen to signs from your body.
 - [Get plenty of sleep](#).
 - Avoid [alcohol](#) and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind.** If you feel able to, try to do some activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

For information, explore CDC's recommendations on [how to cope with a disaster or traumatic event](#).

If any of these steps require changes to your routine, diet, activity level, or medication, talk to your healthcare provider.

If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, anxiety, or thoughts of hurting yourself or others:

- Call 911 if you feel like you want to harm yourself or others.
- Visit the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) [↗](#), call or text 1-800-985-5990.
- Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) [↗](#) or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224.
- Visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) [↗](#) or call 1-800-273-8255

Support People with Post-COVID Conditions

Experiencing post-COVID conditions can be confusing and frustrating, and a person who feels sick long-term may feel isolated. Everyone experiences these conditions differently and may want different types of support or even no support at all. To determine the most helpful steps you can take for others, first listen with compassion and ask questions about what they need.

CDC's [How Right Now campaign](#) provides helpful tools for navigating conversations about the type of support someone with post-COVID conditions may need.



Listen with compassion

The unknown and long-term nature of a post-COVID condition can create stress. Taking steps to understand the person's experiences might make them feel less isolated.

understand the person's experiences might make them feel less isolated.

What to do:

- When listening, give feedback that acknowledges and validates what they are going through.
- For tips on how to communicate compassionately while listening to their experiences, visit the CDC's suggestions for listening with compassion.

2

Start a conversation to gain understanding

Support can look different to different people. To best understand what type of support a person needs, start by asking them to talk and ask questions about their experiences.

What to do:

- When having these conversations, start with an open-ended question, like "How's it going for you these days?" Then, work to narrow down what you can do to help.
- After taking time to compassionately listen to their responses, directly ask what they need or what you can do to help.
- Learn more about CDC's tips on [how to start these types of meaningful conversations](#).

3

Determine how you can help with what they need

After you have listened and worked to understand what support looks like for the person, determine your role in that support.

- Some people may want someone to listen to their experiences more frequently.
- Others may need more physical support (help with household chores, running errands).

There will be times where you may not be able to support a person exactly as they need, and it's ok to acknowledge that. Just be direct in saying what you can and can't do.

For example:

- "I understand that you need help getting groceries because you are not feeling up to grocery shopping. I don't have a car, but I can recommend the delivery service I use."

Employers can support employees experiencing post-COVID conditions by offering flexible leave and work schedule policies, and by providing access to employee assistance programs.

If you are a [caregiver](#), remember that maintaining healthy behaviors and seeking additional support is an important part of helping other people.

Support Groups

[Body Politic](#) 

[Survivor Corps](#) 

[Long COVID Alliance](#) 

[Long COVID Kids](#) 

Additional Resources

[Post-COVID Conditions](#)

[Patient Tips: Healthcare Provider Appointments for Post-COVID Conditions](#)

[Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)

[Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)

[How Right Now | Finding What Helps](#)

[Guidance for Direct Service Providers | COVID-19](#)

[Caring for Yourself When Caring for Another](#)

[Connect With Patients and Families | SCCM](#) 

[RECOVER \(recovercovid.org\)](#) 

[Combat COVID: Information about Clinical Trials](#) 

Last Updated Sept. 1, 2022