



Dorset HealthCare
University
NHS Foundation Trust

Dorset's Post-COVID Syndrome Service

How you can find help to deal with the after-effects of COVID-19 (also known as 'Long COVID')



Information for patients,
relatives and carers

★ Excellence
♥ Compassion
🔍 Expertise
in all we do

What is Post-COVID Syndrome?

Some people who contract COVID-19 will have on-going symptoms of the illness for several weeks, known as 'Long COVID'. However, around one in ten people have persistent symptoms which last for 12 weeks or more. This is known as Post-COVID Syndrome (PCS), and it can have a serious impact on someone's quality of life, their relationships and their ability to work.

Symptoms

There are a large number of symptoms associated with Post-COVID Syndrome. Some of the most common include:

- fatigue
- breathlessness
- headaches
- brain 'fog'
- pain in the joints or chest.

PCS affects people of all ages, men and women. You don't have to have had a particularly severe case of COVID-19, or have been hospitalised, to suffer long-term effects.

There is no evidence that PCS is a permanent condition, and all indications are that – with the right support – people will continue to recover over time.



How can I get help?

If you have had symptoms of COVID-19 for 12 weeks or more, you should contact your GP. They will carry out a series of tests to rule out other causes for your symptoms and, if appropriate, refer you to the PCS Service for specialist support and guidance.

If you are suffering from chest pains or severe breathlessness, please contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible.

What support does the Post-COVID Syndrome Service provide?

PCS staff will carry out a more in-depth assessment of your symptoms and the impact these have on your life. This will be carried out either online, over the phone or – where appropriate and with the necessary safeguards – face to face.

Your case will then be considered by a team of healthcare professionals to agree an appropriate course of action. Depending on your symptoms, this may involve supporting self-management of your condition or signposting you for more specialist advice or treatment.

You will hear from us initially via email or a letter, and then a member of the team will be in contact to discuss the plan with you and oversee your care.

Self-care and support for long-term recovery

There are a number of self-management resources available on managing fatigue, diet, breathing, relaxation and more, which we may provide to help you understand and manage your symptoms as you recover from COVID-19.

Alternatively, we may refer you on to a member of the team specialising in respiratory problems, persistent fatigue, mental health, speech or communication difficulties, physical rehabilitation or other services. If PCS is affecting your ability to work, you could be directed to our vocational rehabilitation team.

The length of time needed to recover from the virus will vary from person to person.

It's important not to compare yourself to others. On-going symptoms could last for several months after you contract COVID-19, and this is not unusual.

More information

Dorset HealthCare's Post-COVID Syndrome Service:

www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/post-covid-syndrome

NHS England's Post-COVID Syndrome page:

www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/post-covid-syndrome-long-covid

Long COVID Support (national charity/support group):

www.longcovid.org

The information in this leaflet is available in additional languages and alternative formats. Please contact the Trust for further details.

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