

Post COVID-19 Navigation Service

Fact sheet

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Most people who have COVID-19 will experience mild illness and symptoms and will recover within a few weeks. However, some people may experience persistent symptoms for weeks or months after their infection.

If you have symptoms that continue for 12 weeks after your COVID-19 symptoms first started, this may be diagnosed as a condition known as “Post COVID-19 Condition”, “Post COVID-19 Syndrome” or “long COVID”.

What is Post COVID-19 Condition?

The World Health Organisation defines Post COVID-19 Condition as a condition that

“occurs in individuals with a history of probable or confirmed SARS CoV-2 infection, usually 3 months from the onset of COVID-19 with symptoms and that last for at least 2 months and cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis. Common symptoms include fatigue, shortness of breath, cognitive dysfunction but also others and generally have an impact on everyday functioning. Symptoms may be new onset following initial recovery from an acute COVID-19 episode or persist from the initial illness. Symptoms may also fluctuate or relapse over time.”

Symptoms of Post COVID-19 Condition

Common symptoms of Post COVID-19 Condition vary between individuals, common symptoms can include:

- fatigue
- shortness of breath
- changes in taste or smell
- chest pain

- difficulty sleeping
- anxiety or depression
- headache
- cognitive dysfunction.

How is Post COVID-19 Condition diagnosed?

Since there is currently no test to diagnose Post COVID-19 Condition, other illnesses must first be ruled out, such as a different respiratory illness or a hidden cardiac condition. There are several medical reasons you may feel fatigue including undiagnosed sleep apnoea, undiagnosed diabetes, depression, and anxiety. It is important to diagnose the correct illness to ensure the best treatment is given.

How likely is someone going to be diagnosed with Post COVID-19 Condition?

Being up to date with COVID-19 vaccination appears to offer some protection against Post COVID-19 Condition. Evidence is still growing about risk. Generally, those at higher risk include older people, those with certain chronic conditions such as diabetes, who had more severe symptoms or who were hospitalised with COVID-19. However, some people without these risk factors are diagnosed with Post COVID-19 Condition as well.



How is Post COVID-19 Condition being treated?

There are challenges with then treating Post COVID-19 Condition; the cause of the syndrome is still being studied. There are potentially different causes for different people.

Some theories about what trigger Post COVID-19 Condition include immune system activation, ongoing inflammation and other abnormalities including in the lungs. There are some common symptoms but there can be some very different symptoms.

For example, some people will have fatigue or heart palpitations. Others will have brain fog and difficulty returning to work. Some people will have muscle loss, breathlessness or cough, and need to be treated in a different way. There is no 'quick fix' or simple treatment.

There is still much to learn about Post COVID-19 Condition and as research continues treatments will develop and change.

What is the Post COVID-19 Navigation Service?

The Department of Health has launched a service to support Tasmanians with Post COVID-19 Condition to manage their ongoing symptoms. The service may also provide referral into appropriate Allied Health Services, such as physiotherapy or social services, if required.

If it has been more than 12 weeks since your COVID-19 symptoms started and they are still ongoing, visit your GP to confirm diagnosis and discuss the Post COVID-19 Navigation Service.

It is important you visit your GP in the first instance to make sure your symptoms are not caused by another condition.

The Post COVID-19 Navigation Service is not an emergency or urgent care service. If you are experiencing a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000) or go to the emergency department immediately.

Who is eligible for the Post COVID-19 Navigation Service and how do I enrol?

You may be eligible for the service if you are:

- a Tasmanian resident
- 16 years or older
- have a diagnosis of Post COVID-19 Syndrome that prevents you (mentally and physically) from returning to pre-COVID function.

You must have a referral from your GP or Health Professional to enrol.

Once your GP refers you, we will contact you within one week to assess your symptoms and make a plan for how you can manage them.

More information

Visit www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/COVID19-recovery