Washington State Department of HEALTH

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Protect yourself from Long COVID: Get Vaccinated

Researchers estimate that millions of people have experienced Long COVID.

Anyone who gets COVID can develop Long COVID.

Studies have found that people who aren't vaccinated against COVID-19 may be more likely than others to develop Long COVID.

Long COVID, or Post-COVID Conditions (PCC), is defined as any signs, symptoms, or conditions that continue or develop after a COVID-19 infection. Symptoms can last weeks, months or years and can include fatigue, brain fog, cough, trouble breathing or shortness of breath, aches and pains, loss of smell or change in taste, fever, trouble sleeping, mood changes and more.

Anyone, regardless of age, infected with COVID-19 can develop Long COVID. It is more common in people who did not get vaccinated, and people who have had severe COVID-19 symptoms. People who get COVID-19 multiple times may also have more health risks, including Long COVID.

You can lower your chances of developing Long COVID symptoms by staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations. COVID-19 vaccinations are recommended for anyone ages 6 months and over.

Preventing Long COVID

The best way to prevent Long COVID is to protect yourself and others from becoming infected with COVID-19. Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccination offers the best protection against COVID-19 infection and severe illness. You can also protect yourself and others from COVID-19 by avoiding close contact with people who have a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 illness, washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, wearing masks in crowds, testing for COVID-19 and staying home when sick.

COVID-19 vaccines are available to people 6 months of age and older, and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Current Research

Researchers estimate that millions of people have experienced Long COVID.

So far, studies have found that the following people may be more likely than others to get Long COVID:

- **People who aren't vaccinated against COVID-19**

- People who get severely ill from COVID-19; particularly those who need hospital care

- People who have underlying health conditions

- People who have experienced multi-system in-flammatory syndrome (MIS) during or after COVID-19 illness

- People who have COVID-19 more than once

Although Long COVID appears to be less common in children and adolescents than in adults, long-term effects after COVID-19 do occur in children and adolescents.

A recent study also found that unvaccinated people should still consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine even if they've already had the disease. They found that unvaccinated people who recovered from COVID-19 and then got a vaccine lowered their risk of developing Long COVID.

Discussing Long COVID with Your Provider

It can be difficult to diagnose Long COVID as there are currently no lab tests for this. If you think you may have Long COVID, prepare for your appointment with your trusted health care provider by making a list of:

- Your current and past medical conditions

- All medications/supplements you take

- All of the symptoms that started after your COVID-19 infection including when they started, how often they occur, what makes them better or worse, and how they affect your life

- All other treatments and tests you've had related to the symptoms you think started after you got COVID-19

Long COVID can be a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act if it limits your ability to do certain things, such as take care of yourself, walk, interact with others, or work.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

Find COVID-19 vaccines near you at vaccines.gov

Have questions?

Email: COVID.Vaccine@doh.wa.gov