

Long COVID

The UK has been living with the COVID-19 pandemic for almost two years and in this time much has been learned about this new virus. For many the effects of the virus are enduring – a collection of symptoms now known as Long COVID.

Long COVID is used to describe signs and symptoms that last for longer than 4 weeks after getting COVID-19. There are two stages to what is commonly known as Long COVID:

1. Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 – symptoms that last 4-12 weeks
2. Post-COVID-19 syndrome – symptoms that last for more than 12 weeks and can't be explained by another diagnosis

Long COVID can affect your whole body, and your symptoms can change and come and go over time. If you think you might have Long COVID, the first thing you should do is speak to your GP. They will investigate your symptoms and first try to find out if there are any other possible causes, to see if there's anything that needs urgent action.

Reported symptoms of Long COVID often include ongoing fatigue and weakness, joint and muscle pains as well as 'brain fog'. Many individuals report that their ability to taste and smell things is impaired too.

How Care first can support

It can be emotionally difficult to cope with any illness, and this is particularly so with COVID and Long COVID as these are illnesses which we know relatively little about given their recent appearance. As such, the uncertainty surrounding Long COVID may cause people to experience increased levels of anxiety, or possibly symptoms of low mood too. Care first's counsellors are able to support you if you've been affected by COVID or any other concern. Available 24 hours a day, our counsellors can help you to work through the difficult feelings associated with illness and help you to develop strategies to cope when you are experiencing difficult emotions.

For further information on Long COVID, please join our live webinar '*Understanding Long COVID*' which is being live on Wednesday 8th September at midday. You can register in advance by following the link below:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/135790103304361232>