What are the lasting impacts from COVID-19?

While we are only beginning to understand the long-term impacts of COVID-19, early evidence suggests a combination of lung, neurological, and heart effects.

Lungs Health Effects

Some patients may experience a drop of 20-30% in lung function after full recovery from COVID-19.¹

Those who suffer from a severe COVID-19 infection in their lungs may develop Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome.²,³

Ground-glass opacity, which indicates lung damage, may exist in high levels for long duration.⁴

Recovered patients have reported ongoing shortness of breath and general exhaustion.⁵,⁶

Lung scarring is more common in those who have underlying health conditions like lung disease or hypertension. Lung damage is also seen in people who spent prolonged time on ventilators.⁶

Pneumonia caused by COVID-19 tends to affect both lungs, which may result in severe lung injury and breathing difficulties.⁷

Lasting lung damage seen in those who have recovered from COVID-19 can develop into progressive, irreversible interstitial lung disease.⁸

Neurological Health Effects

Difficulty thinking can occur after an acute COVID-19 infection. The virus may damage brain cells, and inflammation in the brain or body may cause neurological complications.⁶

Neuropsychological problems can include headaches, dizziness, lingering loss of smell or taste, mood disorders, or deeper cognitive impairments.¹²

Individuals recovering from COVID-19 also report fatigue lasting longer than six weeks.⁷

Heart Health Effects

Some individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 have a myocarditis-like scar that may be permanent.¹⁰,¹¹

Even with mild cases and in previously healthy individuals, some have reported high blood pressure.⁴

Chest pain, thromboembolism, and ventricular dysfunction are common symptoms of post-acute COVID-19.⁷

Slow the Spread

Living in an area where COVID-19 positivity rate falls between 11%-20% makes individuals five times more likely to test positive for COVID-19.¹³

You can help slow the spread by:

- Wearing a face covering.
- Using hand sanitizer or washing hands frequently.
- Keeping at least a six foot distance from others.
- Staying home if you feel ill.
- Regularly cleaning items you use frequently.
Sources


