



Helpful information for
those affected, relatives
and interested parties



Federal Ministry
of Health

BMG
Initiative **LONG**
COVID

What is long COVID?

Infection with the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus can lead to COVID-19 and later to long-term health consequences. These long-term consequences are known as long COVID.

The situation can involve long COVID if:

- an **infection with the coronavirus** has been confirmed or is very likely to have occurred,
- complaints persist, recur or reappear **four weeks** after the onset of the symptoms and
- there is **no other explanation** for the complaints.

Who is in danger?

It is not yet known exactly how long COVID develops. According to current knowledge, **anyone who is infected with the coronavirus** can develop this disease. Long COVID can occur in all age groups. Children and young persons are less frequently affected than adults.

In adults, long COVID is most common in younger and middle adulthood. It is also assumed that women develop long COVID more frequently than men. In addition, people with a severe case of COVID-19 appear to have a higher risk of developing long COVID. The risk probably also increases if you are infected with the coronavirus several times.

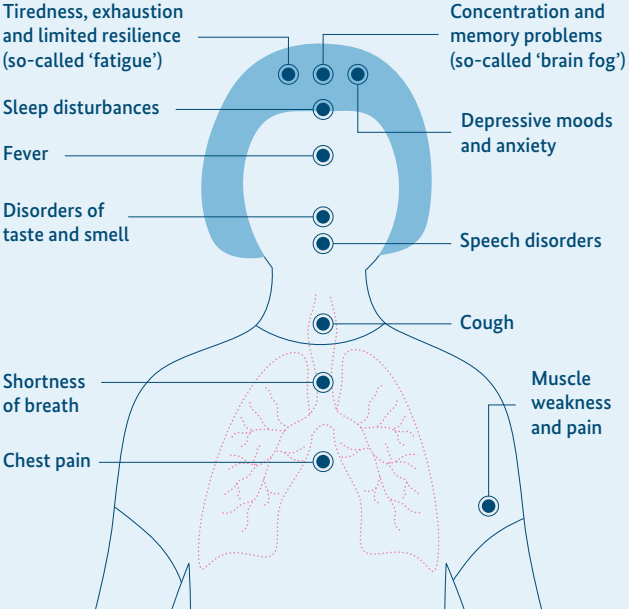
There is evidence that the coronavirus vaccination can reduce the frequency and severity of long COVID symptoms.

Which complaints can arise?

Long COVID complaints can be **very diverse**. Some of those affected only have minor complaints. Others are severely restricted in their daily lives.

Long COVID

Frequent symptoms in adults



Source: RKI, 2022 / WHO, 2021

One of the most common complaints of long COVID, for example, is **fatigue**. Fatigue refers to severe, persistent weakness and rapid exhaustion or tiredness. Some affected people also report stress intolerance. Complaints worsen even after slight physical or mental exertion.

Detailed information about long COVID complaints can be found at www.bmg-longcovid.de/en.

Who should you contact?

If long COVID is suspected, a **family doctor's** or **paediatrician's practice** is usually the first contact point. If necessary, they can also refer you to a specialist practice. Long COVID can also be diagnosed and treated at a COVID-19 speciality practice, or during a special consultation hour at the hospital. The doctor search function of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians or the app '[116117.de](https://www.116117.de)' can help you find suitable practices.

There is no single test or clear 'proof' for long COVID yet. Before a diagnosis of long COVID can be made, other causes of the complaints must first be ruled out.



How is long COVID treated?

There is currently no treatment that tackles the cause of long COVID itself. **The treatment** therefore depends on the health complaints of the person affected, and **can vary greatly from person to person**. The goal is to alleviate the complaints. Not every measure is suitable for all affected persons. The treatment should therefore always be adapted to the personal situation and resilience.

Many complaints improve by themselves over time. At the same time, early treatment can be helpful in some cases to prevent long-term complaints.

In some cases, the different treatments can also be combined during medical rehabilitation.

Where can one find help?

If you are affected by long COVID and need help, you can contact your **family doctor's practice** or **paediatrician's practice**. However, some health insurance companies also offer their members counselling or suitable online services.

So-called services for participation may be considered. Such services are intended to help people lead a self-determined life. This can include, for example, support with independent management of everyday life, leisure activities or housing, e.g. household management. Those affected can take advantage of the counselling services offered by Ergänzende unabhängige Teilhabeberatung (supplementary independent participation counselling) ([EUTB](#)). [Deutsche Rentenversicherung](#) (German statutory pension insurance) and Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation ([BAR](#)) e.V. provide information on rehabilitation services for long COVID.

It can also help to share experiences with others about long COVID. You can find **self-help groups** at many places or online. They offer those affected and relatives the opportunity to communicate with each other. A list of self-help groups can be obtained from Nationale Kontakt- und Informationsstelle zur Anregung und Unterstützung von Selbsthilfegruppen (National Contact and Information Centre for the Encouragement and Support of Self-Help Groups) ([NAKOS](#)) or Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Selbsthilfe (Federal Self-Help Working Group) ([BAG Selbsthilfe](#)).

Employers can support their employees with various offers if they have been diagnosed with long COVID symptoms. Examples of this include adapting the field of work or stepwise reintegration. In some cases, an application for offsetting for disadvantages can be filed for pupils, trainees and students. As a rule, information regarding this can be obtained from the training institution.



Get informed:

As part of the 'BMG Long COVID initiative', the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) provides reliable information, scientific findings and offers of help relating to long COVID on the website www.bmg-longcovid.de/en.

Professionally verified health information



Information from the Federal Ministry of Health
www.bmg-longcovid.de/en



Information about long COVID from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) COVID



Information about infection protection from BZgA (Federal Centre for Health Education):
www.infektionsschutz.de

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