



Recovery from COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The symptoms, severity, and longer-term impact of becoming ill due to COVID-19 may be very different for different people. Many people feel better in a few days or weeks and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks. But for some people, symptoms can last longer. For some people, COVID-19 can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called post-COVID-19 syndrome or "long COVID". Even after initial recovery it is possible that your physical and/or mental wellbeing may continue to be affected.

This leaflet is about recovery post illness due to COVID-19. If you are currently experiencing symptoms please follow the relevant guidelines and medical advice.

Post-viral fatigue

Some of those who have contracted COVID-19 have reported experiencing post-viral fatigue after initial recovery. Post-viral fatigue is when you have an extended period of feeling unwell and fatigued after a viral infection.

Fatigue is a normal part of the body's response to fighting a viral infection such as COVID-19. It is also common after any serious or critical illness that requires being admitted to hospital. Fatigue is likely to continue for some time after the infection has cleared. It can make you feel more tired, unsteady on your feet, standing for long periods can become difficult, and it can affect your memory and ability to concentrate.

Things to do if experiencing post-viral fatigue:

Rest - Is very important for your body as it fights off infection. You need to rest both your body and mind. Keep television, phones and social media to a minimum. Relaxation, breathing and meditation can all support quality rest. If a strategy doesn't work for you, try another one until you find one that does.

Move - Get up and move around slowly and gently a few times each day. This will keep your body mobile and help with circulation.

Keep activity levels low - Both physical and cognitive (thinking) activities use energy. Try to do only a small number of these activities each day, including basic activities of daily living, such as washing and dressing.

Allow time - COVID-19 affects people differently, so give yourself time to recover. Its impact afterwards doesn't always reflect the severity of the virus and you don't have to have been hospitalised to experience fatigue. You may feel pressure to resume your usual activities quickly, but don't rush.

Have fun - Remember the fun things in life. Often people only prioritise things that seem necessary as they return to daily life, but it's important to have a balance. Allow others to help with day-to-day tasks so you can save energy for the activities you enjoy.

If after building up the pacing of your daily activities, you don't see any improvement in what you can do, then you should seek medical advice by speaking to your GP.

Mental Health

Those recovering from COVID-19 may experience elevated rates of stress and anxiety. For some, such as those hospitalised due to COVID-19, there is an increased risk of developing Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. Having to self-isolate may result in feelings of loneliness and disconnection. It is important to acknowledge how you have been affected and speak to someone you trust.

Asking for help

It is not always easy to ask for help and it takes courage. Start by accepting that you need help. Ask someone you feel you can trust – a friend, a tutor, or parent. A conversation with someone you trust can help a lot.

UWS Support

Support from the University Counselling Service

You may want to contact the University Counselling Service. Talking to a counsellor can help you to process your experience and feel supported in your recovery. UWS is committed to supporting your wellbeing and the counselling team is continuing to operate. Please email hub@uws.ac.uk to set up a counselling session.

Support from the University Disability Team

If as a result of having COVID-19 you are experiencing any substantial physical or mental health related issues that are likely to last for 12 months or longer, the Disability Service may be able to make support recommendations to help you get the most from your studies. Please contact disabilityservice@uws.ac.uk for further advice and information.

Staying Active and Connected at UWS

The Students' Union have been offering various social and community events remotely to help students stay connected and have fun. Look out for these and future on-campus events, such as sports and social activities organised by Team UWS.

Resources

Further information on COVID-19 post viral-fatigue:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/recovering-covid-19-post-viral-fatigue-and-conserving-energy>

Latest NHS Scotland and Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

Looking after your mental health during COVID-19 advice from Student Minds:

https://www.studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus_lookingafteryourmentalhealth.html

