

Post COVID Syndrome (Long COVID)

Information for clinicians and practitioners - v2 1/3/2021

Most people will recover from COVID-19 within a short period of time. It is estimated that 90% recover completely within 3 weeks. However it is recognised that for some individuals there are prolonged, multi system effects.

This paper summarises sources of information and resources to support care where the impact of COVID is persisting.

Post COVID syndrome is defined, by NICE, as:- 'Signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis'

In addition to the clinical case definitions, 'long COVID' is commonly used to describe signs and symptoms that continue or develop after acute COVID 19. It includes both ongoing symptomatic COVID 19 and post COVID 19 syndrome (defined above).

Our understanding of the natural history of COVID-19 infection and the long term impacts continues to develop.

The ONS COVID-19 Infection Survey is gathering feedback to understand the impact post COVID is having on day-to-day activities and the proportion of people affected.

What training and information is available to help the practitioner understand and manage post-COVID recovery?

1. Prevalence of longer term covid recovery needs. The prevalence estimate (below) is consistent - 9.8% at 12 weeks (CI 7.4-13.1%) - (individuals who have had a confirmed test.) Highest in 35-49 years then 50-69years and 25-34 years (differences not significant)

[ONS Long Covid Prevalence Document](#)

2. NICE Guidance '[Managing the long term effects of Covid-19](#)'

3. [RCGP online learning - Long COVID-19 \(course is open to all\)](#)

4. [Understanding the experiences of people with post COVID \(National Institute for Health Research\)](#)

5. [ONS - Information on the longer term impact of COVID-19 following hospitalisation](#)



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Information for clinicians and practitioners - ABUHB 24/02/2021

What resources are available to support people who have longer term post-COVID 19 symptoms?

1. [Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; Recovery from COVID-19](#)
(includes advice on managing breathlessness)
2. Access to information on symptoms and how to support your own recovery from COVID-19: www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk
3. Specific strategies to help people managing post COVID-19 fatigue:
www.rcot.co.uk/recovering-covid-19-post-viral-fatigue-and-conserving-energy
4. 'COVID recovery'- all Wales Covid recovery app which includes more than 100 videos and links to advice, app users will be able to record their symptoms, track their progress and learn to manage their condition at home with support. It includes advice from therapists, psychologists, dietitians and consultants:
www.gov.wales/recovery-app-launched-wales-help-support-people-long-covid
5. Support with the emotional and psychological aspects of COVID recovery
<https://www.melo.cymru/> **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**
6. Returning to work after post COVID:
www.som.org.uk/return-to-work/
7. Diet and nutrition – following COVID, patients may have experienced a loss or change in smell or taste (anosmia) and there may be a weight loss due to poor appetite. Some patients may be overweight or obese and may be motivated to move towards a healthy weight.

Food Provision, Health & Nutrition in the current COVID-19 Pandemic:

The attached summary provides useful information for patients who are shielding and those nutritionally at risk

Overall advice on diet and COVID from the Association of UK Dietitians can be found here: www.bda.uk.com/resource/covid-19-corona-virus-advice-for-the-general-public.html

Refer to the community dietitian to provide information about the weight management service in Gwent.

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8. Psychology ABUHB COVID Psychological Care Pathway

Psychological consequences are common after critical illness and are to be expected after being seriously ill with COVID.

Many people will go on to make good recoveries with their usual support but some will have more persistent problems which can be debilitating in the longer term and may include

- Anxiety, fearfulness, low mood, emotional lability and panic
- Intrusive images with or without re-experiencing/flashbacks, with possible development of PTSD
- Nightmares/night terrors
- Avoidance of previously innocuous activities/development of new fears, phobias
- Relationship disruption
- Cognitive issues - changes to memory and attention

Where people are admitted to hospital with COVID-19, there is a psychological pathway that can provide support during admission plus follow up where symptoms persist that according to need, offer advice and intervention and/or signpost to:

- Primary care Mental Health Support Service for trauma issues
- CMHT if meet criteria (e.g. previous mental illness, complex trauma, risk etc.)
- CNRS stroke/ABI service for assessment of cognitive changes, personality changes etc.

Where people are not admitted to hospital and have been ill at home or in community settings who experience persistent psychological consequences can be referred by a health professional for screening and assessment:

Email ABB.ClinicalPsychologyReferrals@wales.nhs.uk
Tel 01633 238292

ABUHB Post COVID pathway developments: next steps:

A COVID recovery programme is being developed through partnership between therapists and the Educating Patient Programme in Gwent. This short programme will be available from early March and will be accessible via self-referral for anyone experiencing extended post-COVID recovery symptoms.

We are developing webpages containing information and resources to support recovery.

Contact us:

We welcome suggestions and feedback. If you have identified service gaps or useful resources that could be shared with colleagues please contact

Karen.gully@wales.nhs.uk or Jacqui.thornton@wales.nhs.uk