



Managing pain

Pain is a commonly reported symptom by people experiencing Long COVID. It can be in specific regions of the body (joint pain, muscle pain, headaches, chest pain and abdominal pain) or generalized and widespread. Persistent pain (lasting for more than three months) can be disabling and affect sleep, fatigue levels, mood, and your ability to concentrate or work. If you experience specific pain symptoms, such as chest pain, that are aggravated by activity, you should consult a health-care professional.

Advice on managing pain

- For joint, muscle or generalized pain, you can take non-prescription analgesics such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen with food.
- Health care professionals can advise on medications that can help with pain that is not responding to over-the-counter analgesics.
- It can be difficult to completely eliminate persistent pain. Aim to make the pain manageable to allow you to function and sleep better, and to engage in essential daily activities.
- Sleeping well can help reduce pain symptoms. Timing the use of pain medications to coincide with sleep might be helpful if pain is interfering with your sleep.
- Listening to relaxing music or meditation can also help reduce pain levels.
- Pacing daily activities is one of the key tools for managing your pain. Gentle exercise also helps release the body's internal chemicals, called endorphins, which help reduce pain levels.
- Be reassured that pain is a common symptom and working through some pain is likely to help break the vicious cycle of pain. You can work through mild pain but don't exert yourself too much to the extent of worsening pain and fatigue levels (post-exertional malaise (PEM)).

