11 Signs You've Already Had COVID-19

These long-term symptoms indicate the virus is still doing damage to your body.

When you first heard about the coronavirus, chances are you were told the symptoms would last 2 to 14 days, if you felt them at all. But now that the COVID-19 has been on these shores for a while, doctors are finding that certain symptoms can last for weeks and sometimes months—even after the patient tests negative for COVID-19. Here's a list of those problems that are currently being reported. Read on, and to ensure your health and the health of others, don't miss these 35 Places You're Most Likely to Catch COVID.

1 Chest Pain and Discomfort

I feel "a burning and tingling across my chest and my neck that came with a hot flash," Kerri Noeth, who is on day 36, told WABC News. "It's just been a wide range of lingering symptoms, particularly heart palpitations, and extreme discomfort in my chest and in my ribs."
Lack of Smell and Taste

One symptom that has come up for a lot of people is losing the ability to taste and smell—normally at the beginning, but for some, it hasn't returned. "I would love to get my sense of taste and smell back," Susan Silverman, who was on day 38, told WABC News.

Vertigo

Silverman also had vertigo. "Vertigo is a sensation of feeling off balance," reports WebMD. "If you have these dizzy spells, you might feel like you are spinning or that the world around you is spinning."

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Lung Tissue Damage

"Chronic fatigue after recovery from a COVID-19 infection is possible and some people who recover continue to feel respiratory symptoms as a result of damage to lung tissue," says Dr. Ari Bernstein, MD, advisor for Fruit Street Health and CovidMD. "Researchers have also found that long term scarring of the lungs, known as fibrosis, can be a problem, which could cause varying levels of long term breathing impairments."

Heart Issues

One could experience heart palpitations and mild heart dysfunction. According to WebMD, "palpitations make you feel like your heart is beating too hard or too fast, skipping a beat, or fluttering."
You Have a Persistent Dry Cough

"The hacking dry cough that is present in COVID is due to irritation of the lung tissue. As air enters the lungs and goes past the irritated tissue, it triggers the cough," says Dr. Leann Poston. "It's likely that your cough will still linger until your body completely heals any damaged tissue," says Dr. Seema Sarin, Director of Lifestyle Medicine, EHE Health.

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Post-ICU Syndrome

"This is a common outcome of having to be intubated and housed in an intensive care unit for a long period of time, which isn't uncommon in COVID-19 patients who need hospitalization," says Dr. Christine Traxler. "The main symptoms seen are similar to PTSD, with anxiety, depression, nightmares, flashbacks, and a higher risk for suicide and long-term mental and physical health complications coming out of the stress of this type of medical experience."
"As you recover, you may notice that at rest, you can breathe fine," says Dr. Poston. "But as the demand for oxygen increases (i.e., increased activity), you are short of breath."

"I've been short of breath for two months, with a firey feeling in my lungs," one patient tells Eat This, Not That! Health. "Even after testing negative for the virus, with my oxygen levels looking OK, the constricting feeling remains."

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"For those patients who were more seriously ill with COVID-19, the changes in lung and kidney function could lead to the presence of chemicals in the blood that are toxic to the brain," says Dr. James Giordano, Professor of Neurology and Biochemistry at Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, DC. "The effects of these chemicals can cause changes in brain function, some of which may last for several weeks to months (if not longer in some cases)."
"There is evidence that, for young people in particular, the first evidence of a COVID-19 infection could be a stroke due to a blockage of a major artery supplying the brain," Dr. Traxler. "If not treated within a few hours after onset, the stroke symptoms are likely to persist and might include arm and leg weakness, facial droop, swallowing problems, balance issues, and speech deficits."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned many patients develop post-viral syndrome with symptoms resembling chronic fatigue syndrome a.k.a. myalgic encephalomyelitis. "Brain fog, fatigue, and difficulty in concentrating," Dr. Fauci said at the International AIDS Conference. "So this is something we really need to seriously look at because it very well might be a post-viral syndrome associated with COVID-19." Traditional ME can last a lifetime.

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Make a Plan for Your Recovery

Work with your medical care team to determine the best course of action for you. Ask for second opinions if you aren't satisfied. Keep a diary, so they can understand what you're feeling and when. And remember this inconvenient truth: Doctors are still learning about the virus. So although they may not be able to help you, informing them about any long-lasting symptoms will eventually help the experts better understand COVID-19.