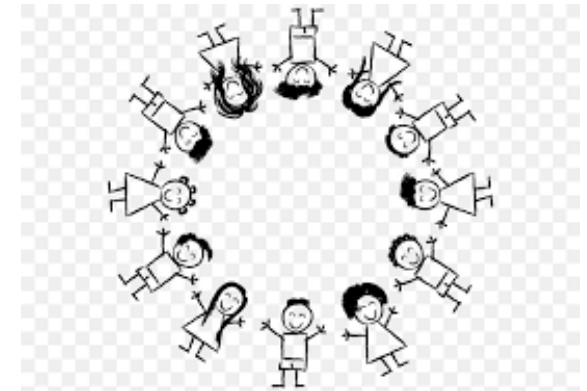


**Acute Paediatric Department.
Information for Parents, Carers
and older children**

Long-covid in children



Who can I contact if I am worried?

Contact your GP to arrange an appointment, they will be able to carry out an assessment and refer you for further support and treatment if needed

We recognise that not everyone will find this document easy to read. We can arrange for large print, audio tape versions and for summaries or explanations in other languages.

Please call 01204 390193

Rest and sleep

- Make sure your child rests and aim for a minimum of 6-8 hours' sleep a night – more in younger children.
- Avoid screens 1 hr. before bedtime.
- Keep the bedroom cool.
- Consider a light box to help with circadian rhythms.
- Minimum of 20 minutes fresh air per day.
- Relaxing activity such as a warm bath before bed every day.
- Lavender oils or bean bags.
- Visit www.thesleepcharity.com

Exercise

- Try and exercise each day to about 85% of capacity – don't push to the limit and keep steady. Ensure fresh air daily.
- Gradually increase over weeks and months, not days.
- Swimming is an excellent activity.
- Pilates and yoga can be helpful.
- Breathing exercises such as square breathing can help.

School/activities (if unable to participate)

- Keep school updated with progress and plan for a phased return.
- Consider starting by attending for lunch to keep in touch with friends and teachers. Try to go every day, even if for a short while.
- Next, consider adding one lesson before or after lunch each day.
- Gradually increase attendance, leaving physical or demanding subjects until last.
- Review the plan regularly with school.

Mental health and mood

- Online resources and contact details for organisations who can support you: <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/support-for-children-young-people>.
- Online, safe counselling and emotional well-being service for children and young people. Available free 365 days a year: www.kooth.com.
- Bury Getting Help Line. All-age, free telephone service for residents in Bury who are experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing: 0161 464 3679.
- For younger children trying to explore their emotions, visit 'Memotional'. Developed to help children understand their emotions: www.memotional.co.uk.
- Streetwise@ Early Break supports young people who are experiencing difficulties with their emotional health and wellbeing by offering one to one support, group work and peer-led support programmes. For further information on how to refer and access this service, then please contact the office on 0161 723 3880 or e-mail info@earlybreak.co.uk.
- The YoungMinds Parents' Helpline offers free confidential online and telephone support, including information and advice, to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25. Contact them on: parents@youngminds.org.uk, 0808 802 5544 or <http://www.youngminds.org.uk>.

Long-covid – Important Points

- Long-covid refers to symptoms lasting more than 12 weeks.
- Gradual recovery is expected.
- Focus on a healthy diet, good sleep pattern and gradual increase in exercise and activity.

Long-covid in children

How is covid-19 affecting children?

Many people are mistaken in thinking that children do not get unwell with covid. Whilst it is true that many children do have a mild illness or test positive without developing symptoms, some children do experience a serious illness due to covid-19, needing treatment in hospital or even intensive care. Fortunately, most children make a complete recovery, but there is growing evidence that children can also experience long term problems that take much longer to resolve.

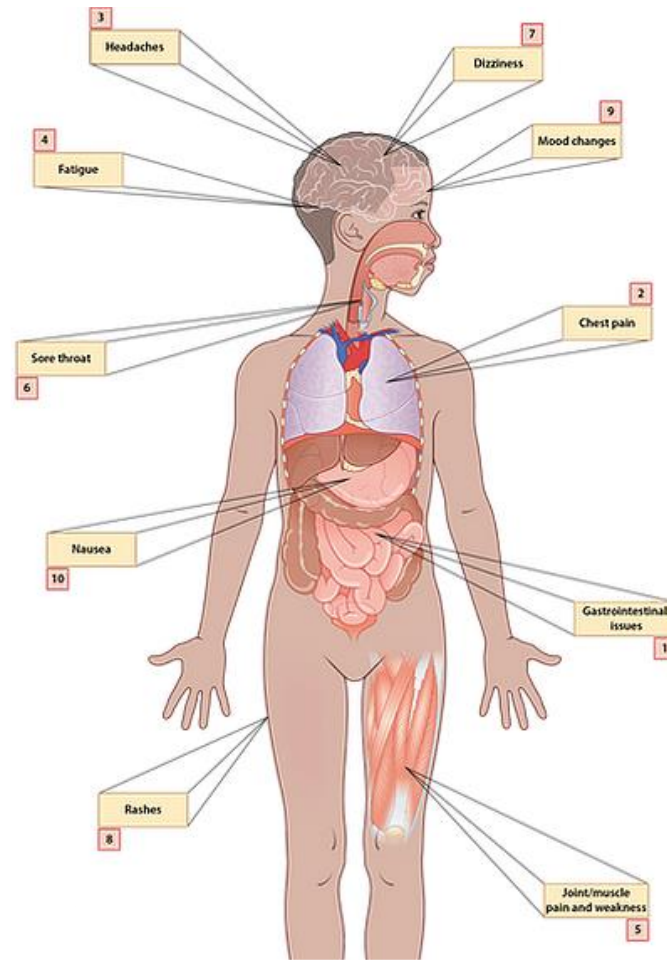
What is post-covid syndrome or long-covid?

Most people get better from their initial illness with covid-19 within 4 weeks. Long-covid is a term being used to describe a number of symptoms or difficulties that last longer than 12 weeks after covid-19 infection. It is not yet fully understood. Sometimes the initial illness can have been very mild, or even have had no symptoms; long-term symptoms can start after a gap where children were well in between.

What problems might long-covid include?

We don't yet have the full knowledge, but these seem to be the top 10 reported symptoms in children:

- Gastrointestinal issues (e.g. diarrhea/pain)
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Joint pain/muscle weakness
- Sore throat
- Dizziness
- Rashes
- Mood change
- Nausea



How is long-covid diagnosed?

There is no diagnostic test for long-covid. Your child does not need to have had proven covid-19, but it is easier to recognize if there was an illness suggestive of covid or a positive test around the right time frame. Although a negative antibody test makes it less likely that someone has had covid-19 in the past, it does not rule it out. Long-covid can be diagnosed by medical professionals based on the symptoms, signs and test results. It is important to rule out other conditions that could mimic long covid.

What tests are needed?

Your child will have a general examination and may need some tests to rule out other medical conditions including measuring oxygen levels and blood pressure, an ECG (heart tracing), a test to monitor oxygen levels whilst exercising (sit-stand test), a chest X-ray or blood tests.

What is the treatment for long-covid?

There isn't a specific treatment for long-covid syndrome. The prognosis looks good and we hope children will gradually make a full recovery. The focus should be on recognising that struggles are real, supporting children so they do not miss out on education and opportunities and on maximizing the progress of recovery.

How can I help my child to recover?

Focus on achieving a healthy diet and good sleep pattern, gradually increasing exercise, and maintaining contact with school and friends. Visit the websites listed on the front of the leaflet.

Dietary changes

Dizziness and fatigue:

- Ensure enough salt and fluids in the diet.
- Vitamin C (e.g. fresh oranges, peppers, broccoli, potatoes, berries).
- Avoid coffee, tea and green tea.

Tiredness / lack of energy / general recovery:

- Folate and B12 - broccoli, cauliflower, rocket, berries, pulses, grains, nuts, seeds.
- Zinc – seafood, nuts, seeds, whole grains.
- Vitamin D – most comes from sunlight, oily fish, eggs, cheese, milk, mushrooms.

Gastrointestinal symptoms:

- Eat a rainbow of fruit & vegetables to encourage health bacteria growth.
- Try probiotics for 1 month.