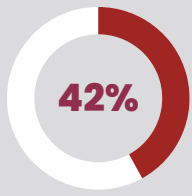


# Post COVID-19 Condition (PCC): A Quick Reference Guide

This patient guide offers a concise summary of resources for Post COVID-19 Condition.

3.5 million

Adults in Canada have experienced longer term symptoms after a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection (As of June 2023).<sup>[1]</sup>



Almost half of those have experienced symptoms for 1 year or longer.<sup>[1]</sup>

## What is Post COVID-19 Condition?

Post COVID-19 Condition, or Long COVID, usually appears within three months from the acute COVID-19 infection and lasts at least two months. Symptoms vary, and can change or worsen over time, and significantly impact daily life, according to the World Health Organization.<sup>[2]</sup>

### POTENTIAL COMMON SYMPTOMS

Have you had persistent symptoms within 3 months after acute infection, and these symptoms have lasted over 2 months?



Fatigue



Shortness of breath



Brain fog



Pain



Sleep problems



Post-exertional malaise<sup>[3]</sup>

For the full list of Common Symptoms, please refer to figure 2, 3 and 4.<sup>[4]</sup>

If you have acute chest pain or difficulty breathing, acute or new neurological symptoms (e.g. headache, drooping face, arm or leg weakness, vision problems or loss, slurring speech etc.) or suicidal thoughts, please contact acute care emergency.



If you have any of these symptoms, and you think you may have Post COVID-19 Condition, **please contact a health care professional.** They may consider the information below.

Do you have any of the following factors?



- ☐ **Other medical conditions** (i.e. diabetes, respiratory, cardiac, cancer)
- ☐ **Social determinants of health** (i.e. house and food insecurity, lack of support, lack of healthcare access)
- ☐ **Population group** (i.e. Indigenous peoples, refugees and immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons involved in the justice system, people with disabilities, elderly people, pregnant women, children)
- ☐ **Acute infection which required hospitalization.**

No

Yes

**Uncomplicated:** requires self-care programs or resources.

- Health care professional follow-up as needed.
- Some individuals may require care navigators.
- If indicated, based on individuals' presentation, may require consultation with a specialist or allied health care professional.

**Complex care:** requires a plan of care and **closer follow-up** by a health care professional.

- May require consultation with other specialists and/or allied health care professionals or care team.
- Discuss these options with a health care professional, if they are applicable to you:**
  - Self-care programs or resources
  - Care navigators



MyGuide is a useful resource for patients and family members:  
[myguidelongcovid.ca](https://myguidelongcovid.ca)



### Resources on page 2 were drawn from:

- [American Thoracic Society](#)
- [Anxiety Canada](#)
- [BCguidelines.ca](#)
- [CAN-PCC](#)
- [Canadian GI Society](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society](#)
- [The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health | CAMH](#)
- [Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Ouest](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Dysautonomia International](#)
- [Health Link BC](#)
- [Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](#)
- [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](#)
- [Myguidelongcovid.ca](#)
- [Pain Canada](#)
- [RxFiles.ca](#)
- [Saskatchewan Health Authority](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

Scan to access the digital version of this Quick Reference Guide, complete with resource links.



Scan for more details about Post COVID-19 Condition and the CAN-PCC National Guidelines.



# Approach

# Resources



**Post-exertional malaise**

- Your healthcare provider will use validated questionnaires to assess as per CAN-PCC guidelines for:
  - >PEM: i.e. [DePaul Symptom Questionnaire \(DSQ\)](#)
  - >Fatigue: i.e. Post COVID-19 [functional status scale](#)
  - >[EuroQol-5D\(EQ-5D\)](#).
- Your healthcare provider may also order laboratory tests based on the clinical assessment (i.e. Thyroid, glucose, complete blood count, iron studies, etc.)
- Inquire about your daily activities ([CAN-PCC](#))



**Fatigue**



**Brain fog**

- Your healthcare provider will use validated tools to perform a cognitive assessment based on your initial clinical presentation.
- Your healthcare provider will rule out neurological conditions and possible reversible causes of cognitive impairment.



**Shortness of breath**

- Your healthcare provider may perform a thorough clinical assessment to rule out acute cardiopulmonary causes.
- Your health care provider may also perform tests based on clinical assessment (i.e. chest x-ray, ECG, spirometry, complete blood count, etc.)



**Sleep problems**

You may encounter sleep problems, including insomnia. See resources for more information.



**Mental Health**

- Your healthcare provider will screen for mental health conditions, including:
- [Depression | CAN-PCC](#)
  - Generalized anxiety disorder.
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
  - Suicide risk
  - Other mental health conditions



**Cardiac**

Your healthcare provider will perform a thorough clinical assessment to rule out acute cardiac causes for your symptoms. See resources for more information.



**Dizziness**

- Your healthcare provider will perform a thorough clinical assessment to rule out acute cardiac, neurological or other causes.
- Your healthcare provider may order the following:
  - >Laboratory tests based on the assessment (i.e. Thyroid, glucose, complete blood count, iron studies).
  - >[10-minute standing test | CAN-PCC](#)
  - >Consider assessment for POTS and other heart conditions.



**Gastro-intestinal**

Your healthcare provider will perform an assessment based on your symptoms.  
Common GI symptoms include:

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea & constipation
- Nausea & vomiting

Your healthcare provider will let you know if you qualify for screening of colorectal cancer.



**Pain**

Your healthcare provider will assess your pain and the impact it is having on your quality of life using validated tools:

- [Brief Pain Inventory](#)
- [DN4 Questionnaire for Neuropathic Pain](#)



**Children & Adolescents**

Your healthcare provider will perform a thorough clinical assessment to rule out acute conditions that may be causing the symptoms and may require a referral to a specialist.

Patient education about the [4 Ps](#):<sup>[5]</sup>

- [Pacing](#)
- [Prioritizing/postpone](#)
- [Positioning/modify](#) (i.e. while sitting)
- [Planning](#)

Treatment is prioritized based on the presence of medical conditions and severity of symptoms.

- [MyGuide | Longcovid](#)
- [Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & PEM | CDC](#)
- [Exercise Recommendation | CAN-PCC](#)

- [Long COVID Self-Management – Cognition | SHA](#)
- [Brain Fog and COVID 19 | Quebec](#)
- [Brain Fog | CAN-PCC Recommendation](#)

Please visit the following resources for more information:

- [Diagnostic Testing | CAN-PCC](#)
- [Long COVID Self-Management – Managing Shortness of Breath | SHA](#)
- [Breathlessness | American Thoracic Society](#)

- [CAN-PCC Recommendation: Sleep](#)
- [Long COVID Self-Management – Sleep | SHA](#)
- [Getting a Good Night's Sleep | Blog | Anxiety Canada](#)
- [Insomnia | MyHealth Alberta](#)
- [Insomnia Patient Booklet | RxFiles](#)

Your healthcare provider will give you guidance for management of any mental health conditions, if diagnosed. Please visit the following resources for more information:

- [Mental Health Support | Government of Canada](#)
- [The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health | CAMH](#)
- Local resources.

- [About heart diseases and conditions | Government of Canada](#)
- [Heart Conditions | Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](#)
- [Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome \(POTS\) | HealthLink BC](#)
- [Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome | Dysautonomia International](#)
- [Holter Monitoring Recommendation | CAN-PCC](#)
- [Electrocardiogram Recommendation | CAN-PCC](#)

If your health care provider identifies cardiac, neurological, or other conditions as the cause of your symptoms, you may be referred to a specialist if indicated.

- [Dizziness: Lightheadedness and Vertigo | SHA](#)
- [Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome | Dysautonomia International](#)
- [Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome \(POTS\) | MyHealth Alberta](#)
- [Dizziness | MyGuide Long COVID](#)

For information on gastrointestinal conditions please visit the following website:

- [Digestive Health Library | Canadian GI Society](#)

These are some resources about pain that may help with managing your symptoms:

- [About Chronic Pain | Government of Canada](#)
- [Chronic Pain and Opioids | BC Guidelines](#)
- [Resources for People with Pain | Pain Canada](#)

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- [A home for paediatricians. A voice for children and youth. | Canadian Paediatric Society](#)
- [Home | Caring for kids](#)

[1] Government of Canada. "Fall 2023 Report" <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/post-covid-condition/fall-2023-report.html#>

[2] World Health Organization. "Post COVID-19 Condition." <https://www.who.int/teams/health-care-readiness/post-covid-19-condition>

[3] Vollestad, Nina K., and Mengshoel, Anne Marit. "Post-Exertional Malaise in Daily Life and Experimental Exercise Models." *Frontiers in Physiology*, 2023. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38111900/>

[4] O'Mahoney LL, Routen A, Gillies C, Ekezie W, Welford A, Zhang A, et al. "The prevalence and long-term health effects of Long Covid among hospitalised and non-hospitalised populations: a systematic review and meta-analysis." 2023 Jan 1;55:101762. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36474804/>

[5] Quinn KL, Cheung AM, Razak F. Treating common and potentially modifiable symptoms of post-COVID-19 condition (long COVID) in adults. *CMAJ*. 2023 Jan 17;195(2):E80-E81. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.220824. Erratum in: *CMAJ*. 2023 Feb 21;195(7):E276. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.230115. PMID: 36649947; PMCID: PMC9851632. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36649947/>

**Scan to access the PCC Patients & Families site, offering a range of patient resources.**

