

Children also face long-term effects of COVID-19

May 5 2021, by From Mayo Clinic News Network



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Long-term effects of COVID-19 infection are affecting the health of some children and teens, as well as adults. While most children with COVID-19 infection have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all,

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says anyone who has had COVID-19 — even if the illness was mild or if they had no symptoms — can have long-term effects.

"This concept of long COVID-19, or long-haulers, refers to a subgroup of people who get COVID-19 infection. Instead of recovering within a couple of weeks of their infection, they go on to have symptoms, usually for weeks or months afterward," says Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a pediatric infectious diseases physician at Mayo Clinic.

"This doesn't happen to everyone," explains Rajapakse. "But it certainly is now well-described in some people who develop this infection. And we're trying to understand why it happens to some people and not to everyone. It's certainly well-described in adults, and we are now hearing of cases in kids. The teenage age group seems to be the most significantly impacted."

Several studies are underway. For instance, the National Institutes of Health is studying COVID-19 in children, including long-term outcomes for kids who have become infected with the virus.

"A lot of efforts have gone into place to first help identify these patients and figure out the best way we can help them," says Rajapakse. "The patients who are having these symptoms seem to be having a lot of difficulty getting back to their previous level of functioning—returning to school, returning to work, returning to sports that they may have participated in."

"One of the really challenging things about long COVID-19 is it's not one condition or one set of symptoms," says Rajapakse. "People are describing a variety of different symptoms, like profound fatigue, muscle aches, pains, [sore throat](#), fevers, breathing difficulties, and each person almost has a unique kind of constellation of these symptoms."

These symptoms can go on for varying periods of time and be of varying severity."

Long COVID-19 symptoms may include:

- Tiredness or fatigue.
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as "brain fog").
- Headache.
- Loss of smell or taste.
- Dizziness on standing.

It's not yet known why or how often some people experience long-haul COVID-19 symptoms. These symptoms can also overlap with symptoms of many other [chronic medical conditions](#), making it important that a thorough medical evaluation is performed to ensure there is not another medical issue causing the symptoms.

"There are questions as to whether these symptoms are arising because of the impact of the virus itself on certain [organ systems](#), or is this more of an impact of your immune system and how it responded to the infection? There are different possibilities for what could be causing this," says Rajapakse. "But I think the initial focus has been helping to identify these patients, getting them to [medical care](#) that can help them, and trying to understand what the underlying issue is here that's driving this."

©2021 Mayo Clinic News Network
Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC

Citation: Children also face long-term effects of COVID-19 (2021, May 5) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-05-children-long-term-effects-covid-.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.