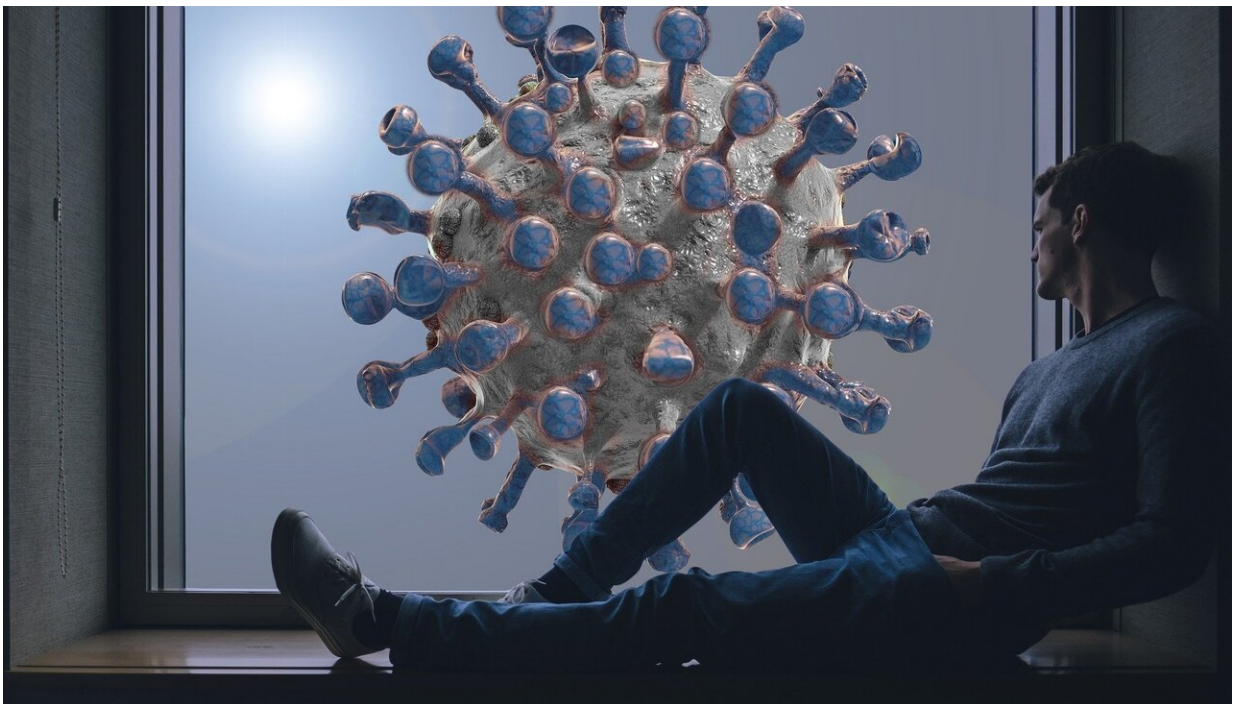


# Post-COVID symptoms: Women differ distinctly from men

December 7 2021

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In a study of the first 108 patients seen by Mayo Clinic's Post-COVID-19 Care Clinic, researchers found that women predominantly showed symptoms of fatigue, followed by muscle pain and low blood pressure, while men primarily experienced shortness of breath. The team says these characteristics will help health care providers diagnose and

treat people suspected of having post-COVID syndrome. The findings, based on data collected between January and April, appear in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

To better understand the characteristics of post-COVID-19 — what is also known as long-haulers syndrome — Mayo researchers analyzed cases of the first 108 patients in their new care clinic, of which 75 percent were women.

They found six main symptoms:

- Fatigue.
- Muscle ache or pain.
- Low blood pressure.
- Chest pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Headache.

Of 81 women studied, 72 percent had fatigue as their dominant symptom. Of the 27 men in the study 58 percent had shortness of breath.

Most patients in the study also showed a sharp rise in interleukin, or IL-6, a cytokine that the immune system releases to fight disease. But IL-6 also causes inflammation. These [patients](#)—57 percent of the cohort—had high IL-6 levels up to three months after being infected with COVID-19. IL-6 has long been associated with fatigue and sleep problems. The same level of IL-6 was not present in the men in the study.

The downstream effects of these symptoms means immune dysregulation for weeks or months, and a slow recovery. The three major symptoms of the women—fatigue, muscle aches and [low blood pressure](#)—make up what is known as central sensitization syndrome and

the core of what is now being called post-COVID syndrome.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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