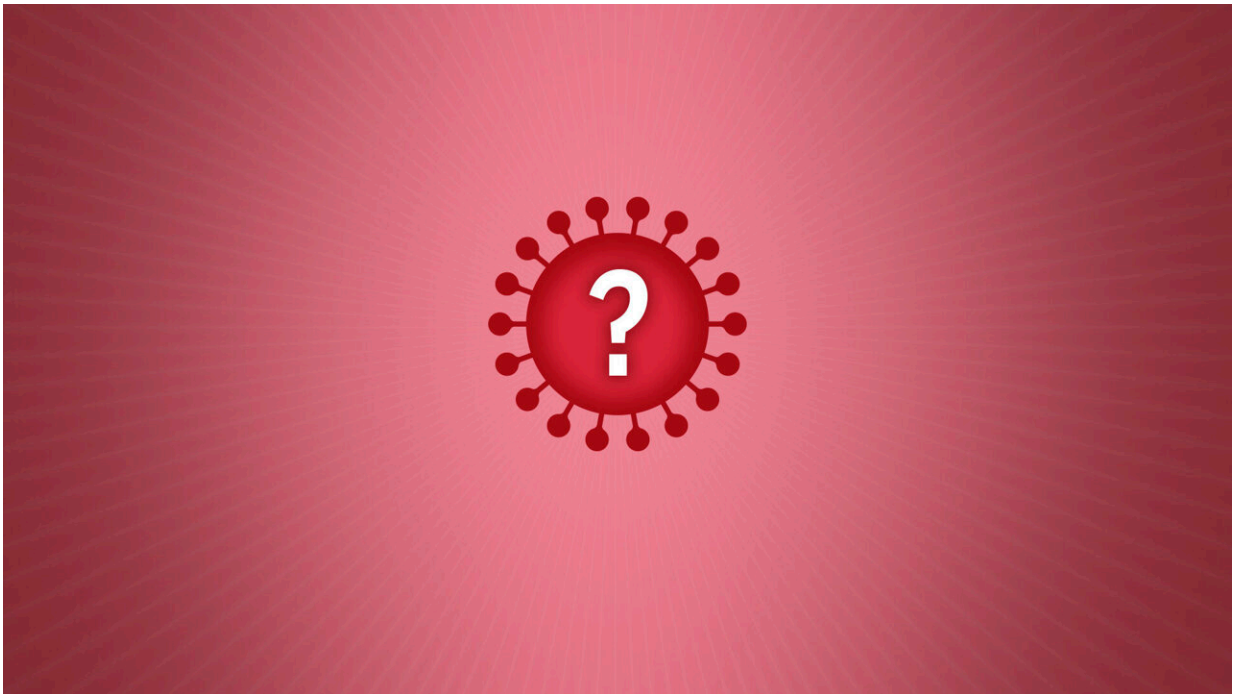


Can you get long COVID after an infection with omicron?

February 9 2022, by Laura Ungar



Can you get long COVID after an infection with omicron? Credit: AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

Can you get [long COVID](#) after an infection with omicron?

It's too early to know for sure, but many doctors believe it's possible to have [long-term effects](#) from the [omicron variant](#) of the virus.

Long COVID is usually diagnosed many weeks after a bout with COVID-19. Any [long-lasting effects](#) typically appear about 90 days after symptoms of the initial infection go away, Maria Van Kerkhove of the World Health Organization said this week.

Overall, some estimates suggest more than a third of COVID-19 survivors will develop some symptoms of long COVID. Symptoms include fatigue, brain fog, shortness of breath, anxiety and other problems. The lingering illness is more likely if you've been hospitalized with COVID-19, but research shows it can happen even after a mild infection.

Omicron began its race around the world late last year. The variant generally causes milder illness than the delta version of the coronavirus, but has still overwhelmed hospitals.

Van Kerkhove said she hasn't seen any research indicating that the portion of COVID-19 survivors who get long COVID will change with the [omicron](#) variant.

Dr. Linda Geng of Stanford University, who co-directs one of the many clinics specializing in long COVID, said that though she can't say for sure, a new wave of patients is likely.

"We have to be very cautious and very careful and prepared," Geng said.

In the meantime, scientists are racing to figure out what's behind the mysterious condition. Some theories? It may be an autoimmune disorder. Tiny microclots may be causing the disabling symptoms. Or perhaps latent viruses in the body have been reactivated.

Scientists are also looking at whether vaccines could be part of the answer. A Yale University team is studying the possibility that

vaccination might reduce long COVID symptoms. And two other studies offer early evidence that being vaccinated before getting COVID-19 could help prevent the lingering illness or at least reduce its severity.

More information: [How many times can I reuse my N95 mask?](#)

[When am I contagious if infected with omicron?](#)

[Do at-home COVID-19 tests detect the omicron variant?](#)

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