

Most patients regain taste, smell following COVID-19

August 10 2022



Nearly nine in 10 patients reporting a COVID-19-related smell or taste

dysfunction completely recovered within two years, although recovery took more than six months for 10.9 percent of patients, according to a research letter published online Aug. 4 in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*.

Paolo Boscolo-Rizzo, M.D., from University of Padova in Italy, and colleagues estimated the two-year prevalence and recovery rate of smell or [taste dysfunction](#) among 168 mildly symptomatic adult patients at onset, four weeks, eight weeks, six months, and two years after COVID-19 (pre-omicron).

The researchers found that an altered sense of smell or [taste](#) (Sino-nasal Outcome Test 22 score >0) was reported by 64.3 percent at baseline, 38.1 percent at four weeks, 17.3 percent at eight weeks, 16.1 percent at six months, and 8.3 percent at two years. Complete resolution of COVID-19-associated smell or taste dysfunction (onset within four weeks of infection; 119 patients) occurred in 88.2 percent of individuals, while 9.2 percent reported a decrease in the severity and 2.5 percent reported the symptom was unchanged or worse. A late recovery (more than six months after onset) was reported by 10.9 percent of patients. The persistence of at least one symptom, including nonchemosensory symptoms, at two-year follow-up was reported by 28.0 percent of patients.

"Patients should be reassured that [recovery](#) from smell or taste impairment may continue for many months after the onset," the authors write.

More information: Paolo Boscolo-Rizzo et al, Two-Year Prevalence and Recovery Rate of Altered Sense of Smell or Taste in Patients With Mildly Symptomatic COVID-19, *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoto.2022.1983](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoto.2022.1983)

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