



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

12/5 - Managing Long Covid-19 Symptoms

Introduction

COVID-19 has rocked our world since March 2020. Due to its rapid mutation, there's much more to discover about this virus and its impact on long-term health.

Most COVID-19 survivors bounce back fully after six months, but not all. If you're experiencing long COVID symptoms, you're not alone. According to the CDC, approximately 13.3% of Americans experience prolonged symptoms. This means that more than one in 10 COVID-19 survivors may fit the criterion for "long" COVID-19.

Long COVID involves symptoms that linger months or even years after the initial infection. Post-COVID-19 conditions are numerous and vary greatly from person to person. Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath and/or lightheadedness
- Heart palpitations
- Tiredness or fatigue
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities
- Brain fog
- Changes in ability to smell or taste
- Cough
- Headache
- Chest pain
- Stomach pain and/or diarrhea
- Joint or muscle pain
- Sleep problems
- Fever
- Rash
- Mood changes
- Irregular menstrual period cycles



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at [Eliteptf.com](https://www.Eliteptf.com) for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

What Can You Do to Manage Your Symptoms?

The answer to this question depends on the symptoms you are experiencing. However, here are six best practices for anyone with long COVID:

1. Eat Enough Calories so Your Body Has Fuel to Heal

How much is "enough"? This depends on body size. The November 2019 issue of Critical Care Journal advises consuming 35 to 47 calories per kilogram of body weight. As an example, someone weighing 125 pounds should consume at least 2,000 to 2,650 calories per day.

Eat snacks to meet your personal energy requirements. Energy-supporting snacks are those that contain a high-fiber carbohydrate (such as a fruit, veggie or whole grain) along with a protein (Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, tuna, peanut butter, eggs or edamame).

2. Prioritize Protein to Stimulate Muscle Repair

Shoot for 25 to 35 grams of protein at each meal and between 10 and 20 grams at each snack. For reference, an egg has 6 grams, ½ cup of cottage cheese packs in 14 grams and 5 ounces of salmon will fuel you with 28 grams of protein.

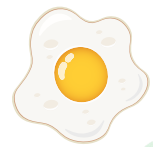
3. Don't Forget Carbs

Yes, protein is vital, but healthy fats and carbs—all part of a balanced diet—also play important roles. Carbs are especially important if you are experiencing low energy or fatigue. In that case, make sure to consume carbs every three to four hours at a meal or as a snack.

Consuming sufficient complex carbohydrates throughout the day can make a huge difference. That's because carbs are our brain and body's preferred source of energy. Complex carbohydrate like fruits, veggies and whole grains (brown rice, whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat pasta) are all great sources.

4. Feed Your Gut

If you've been reading EPT's weekly health topics or monthly newsletter, then you know gut health is vital to overall health. While no single food or drink can prevent or cure a medical condition, a whopping 70% to 80% of our immune system actually resides in the gut. That's why you need to feed it right!



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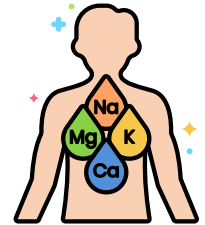
Try probiotic-rich food like sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, kombucha, and tempeh. Don't care for the taste of these fermented products? Opt for low-fat and low sugar yogurt instead. Add prebiotic-rich foods like oats, barley, wheat bran, soy beans, flaxseeds, asparagus and apples to your diet. Increasing fiber helps fertilize the probiotics. A good start to your day would be high-fiber oatmeal sprinkled with chia seeds.

We can't stress it strongly enough. Gut health is key as an effective treatment strategy for long COVID. If you are interested, EPT can recommend high quality probiotic/prebiotic supplements.



5. Drink Plenty of Water and Replace Electrolytes

If your symptoms are gastrointestinal, say, diarrhea or vomiting, or if you're running a fever, you are likely losing fluids and electrolytes. Stay well hydrated. Besides water, replace your depleted electrolytes with foods rich in sodium and potassium. For a sodium boost, drink broth or snack on pickles, pretzels, or saltines. To amp up potassium, nosh on potatoes, yogurt, beans, oranges and bananas.



6. Eat the Rainbow

Adding more color to your diet means you're cranking up your consumption of essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and dietary fiber. A September 2021 review in the Journal of Current Nutrition found increasing fruit and vegetables can improve long COVID symptoms.

You don't need to turn vegetarian or vegan. Just increase the fruits and vegetables you are already eating. If you love scrambled eggs in the morning, add spinach, tomato slices or mushrooms. If you prefer waffles, opt for the whole grain kind and top with blueberries, raspberries or sliced banana.



Because of their rich antioxidant profiles, fruits and vegetables help support the immune system. Having long COVID can damage your organs. It may dispose you to developing chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease - all very good reasons to keep your immune system as healthy as possible.



A Note About Exercise

Even under normal circumstances, determining the right type, intensity and frequency of exercise is a very involved and complex process. Designing a proper exercise program for those with lingering COVID-19 symptoms is beyond the scope of this column.

If you have had COVID-19 and are still experiencing symptoms, please contact our office for a thorough evaluation and a fitness and nutrition program tailored to your unique needs.



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1 Wiertsema SP, van Bergenhenegouwen J, Garssen J, Knippels LMJ. The Interplay between the Gut Microbiome and the Immune System in the Context of Infectious Diseases throughout Life and the Role of Nutrition in Optimizing Treatment Strategies. *Nutrients*. 2021 Mar 9;13(3):886. doi: 10.3390/nu13030886. PMID: 33803407; PMCID: PMC8001875

2 Storz MA. Lifestyle Adjustments in Long-COVID Management: Potential Benefits of Plant-Based Diets. *Curr Nutr Rep*. 2021 Dec;10(4):352-363. doi: 10.1007/s13668-021-00369-x. Epub 2021 Sep 10. PMID: 34506003; PMCID: PMC8429479.



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