



## COVID-19 vaccines prevent long COVID: Suggested talking points

- **Long COVID describes [a cluster of symptoms](#) occurring after a COVID-19 infection that can range from mild to debilitating.**
  - Symptoms may include fatigue, chest pain, brain fog, dizziness, abdominal pain, joint pain, and changes in taste or smell. These symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years.
  - Scientists still don't know why some people develop long COVID. One possibility is that fragments of the virus [linger in the body after infection](#), causing chronic inflammation. Another is that long COVID [is an autoimmune disease](#) triggered by a COVID-19 infection.
  - There is no specific treatment for long COVID, but health care providers can help patients manage individual symptoms.
- **Anyone who gets infected with COVID-19 is at risk of developing long COVID, and some populations are at greater risk.**
  - Unvaccinated people are at greater risk of developing long COVID.
  - Women are [more likely](#) than men to develop long COVID.
  - People who experience health inequities may be more likely to develop long COVID and face [barriers to treatment](#).
- **Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines is an effective way to reduce your risk of long COVID.**
  - A meta-analysis of 24 studies found that people who had received three COVID-19 vaccines [were 68.7 percent less likely to develop long COVID](#) compared with those who were unvaccinated.
  - Another study found that a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine reduced the risk of long COVID by 21 percent, two doses reduced it by 59 percent, and [three or more doses reduced it by 73 percent](#).
  - The CDC recommends the updated COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Find appointments near you at [Vaccines.gov](#).



# COVID-19 vaccines prevent long COVID: Frequently asked questions

## 1. What is long COVID?

Long COVID is [a cluster of symptoms](#) that can occur after a COVID-19 infection for weeks, months, or years. Symptoms range from mild to debilitating and may include fatigue, chest pain, brain fog, dizziness, abdominal pain, joint pain, and changes in taste or smell.

Scientists still don't know why some people develop long COVID. One possibility is that fragments of the virus [linger in the body after infection](#), causing chronic inflammation. Another is that long COVID [is an autoimmune disease](#) triggered by a COVID-19 infection. Currently, there is no known cure for long COVID. Patients can work with their health care providers to help manage individual symptoms.

## 2. Who is at risk of developing long COVID?

Anyone who gets infected with COVID-19 is at risk of developing long COVID, and the CDC estimates that [nearly one in five U.S. adults](#) who contract COVID-19 suffer from long COVID.

The latest research shows that unvaccinated people are [much more likely to develop long COVID](#) than people who are up to date on COVID-19 vaccines. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is an effective way to prevent long COVID.

Women are [more likely](#) than men to develop long COVID. People who experience health inequities—including people of color, people with lower incomes, and people with disabilities—may be more likely to develop long COVID and may face [barriers to treatment](#).

## 3. How can I prevent long COVID?

Long COVID occurs after a COVID-19 infection, so protecting yourself from COVID-19 is the best way to prevent it.

Staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines [dramatically reduces the risk](#) of developing long COVID. Getting all your recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccines is your best protection and makes you less likely to [experience long-term symptoms](#). The CDC recommends the updated COVID-19 vaccine [for everyone 6 months and older](#).

Wearing a high-quality, well-fitting mask also protects you from getting COVID-19, especially in crowded and indoor spaces. N95 and KN95 masks offer [the best protection](#). Learn more about the types of masks and how to use them [from the CDC](#). At indoor gatherings, improving ventilation by opening doors and windows, using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, and [building your own Corsi-Rosenthal box](#) can also reduce the spread of COVID-19.