Coronavirus (COVID-19): Longer-term effects (long COVID)

Easy Read

Most people recover quickly from the coronavirus.

Some people can have signs of illness from coronavirus for a long time.

This is called Long Covid

What to expect

You can find out more information about this in this booklet. You can find it on the internet here:

https://www.sign.ac.uk/patient-and-public-involvement/patient-publications/long-covid/

It tells you what the common signs of illness of long covid are

It tells you how a doctor will find out if you have long covid

It tells you more about what care you will be given

Your recovery

It can take people a different amount of time to get better from the coronavirus.

You should do things like:

Think about how tired you are feeling

Try not to do too much

Try and get lots of sleep

Try to eat healthy food

You should speak to your GP if you are worried about how you are feeling.

Fatigue

Fatigue is a word for feeling tired with no energy.

You might find it hard to do things because you do not have the energy.

Plan your day

Having a plan for your day can help.

Do only what you feel you can do.

Do the most important things you have to do.

Take breaks between doing things.

Pace yourself

Try to pace yourself. This means do not do lots of things on the one day,
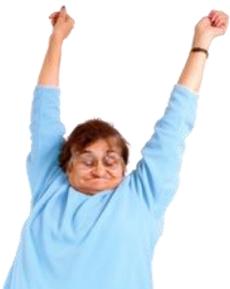

Try to space out doing things over different days.

Do not try to do more things each day if it is making you more tired.

Move around

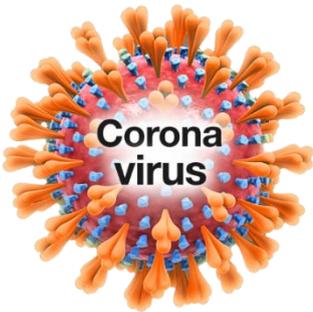Do not stay in the same position for too long even when you have no energy.

Try getting up for a stretch to change your position.

Breathlessness

After an illness you may feel short of breath more easily. This is called breathlessness.

This can happen if you've had coronavirus. Even if you have not needed to stay in hospital.

Sometimes changing position can help breathlessness.

Try to stay relaxed so you do not panic and make things worse.

Being supported by pillows and cushions can help as well.

A technique called breathing control can help with breathlessness.

Sit in a relaxed position in a chair with your back well supported.

Place one hand on your tummy.

Slowly take a deep breath in through your nose.

As you breathe in, allow your tummy to rise up.

As you breathe out slowly you should feel your tummy relax down.

Another thing that can help is called Pursed lip breathing.

Take a breath in through your nose.

Gently breathe out through your mouth with your lips pursed. This is like when you are whistling or blowing out a candle.

Try to breathe out for longer than you breathe in.

Another technique is called Blow as you go.

Breathe in before you start to move. Then then breathe out when you're making a big effort like lifting something heavy.
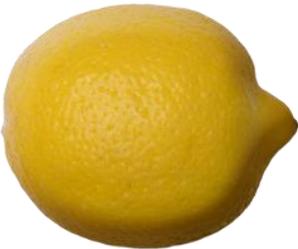
Coughs

Coughing is a way that the body gets rid of things in our lungs.

Some people can have a cough for a long time after coronavirus.

If you have a dry cough then water can help you.

A drink with honey and lemon can help as well.

You could try breathing in steam.

You can do this by pouring hot water into a bowl.

Avoid things that can make you cough like smoking or smelly candles.
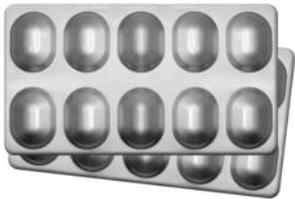
Pain

Some people might have pain after coronavirus.

You can follow the earlier advice about not doing too much.

You can take medicine that can help with the pain.

You can talk to family and friends about how you are feeling.

Problems with sleep

Lots of people can struggle to sleep after not being well.

There are some things you can do to try and sleep better.

Try and have your bedroom at a comfortable temperature. This means not too hot or too cold.

Make sure your bedroom is dark.

Try to relax before you go to bed

Get ready for bed at the same time each night.

Try not to use a mobile phone or computer before you go to bed.

Try to get up at the same time each day.

Avoid drinks with caffeine like tea can coffee before you go to bed.

Try speaking to friends and family about anything that is worrying to you.

Mental Health

Being unwell can make your mental health worse and make you feel bad.

Try speaking to friends and family about anything that is making you feel unwell or bad.

Here are some numbers you can call that might help

Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans on 116 123

British Red Cross   0808 196 3651

Anxiety

Being unwell can make us feel anxious.

You might feel anxious and worried after having had coronavirus.

This means you can have trouble sleeping.

It can be difficult to concentrate.

It can be difficult to remember things.

You can have changes in mood and how you are feeling quickly.

You have flashbacks. This means you remember something that might have been very difficult.

Returning to work

You should be careful about how you go back to your job.

It will depend on how you are feeling.

You might no go back to your job and do all the days and hours you did before.

You might gradually do more days and hours as you start to feel better.

You should speak to your boss about going back to your job.

Other information

You can find some information about some of these things at this NHS England website

https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/