

NSAID use can sometimes cause other types of problems too. These may include allergic reactions, higher risk for heart and kidney issues, and worsening of asthma symptoms. The risk is greater if you take a high dose or take them for a long time.

Tips for taking NSAIDs safely:

- Use the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.
- Don't mix NSAIDs with other pain relievers.
- Take NSAIDs with food or a glass of milk to help coat the lining of your stomach.
- Don't drink alcohol—mixing the two can raise the risk of stomach or other problems.
- Never start or stop a medicine without asking your doctor first.

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Care ConnectionsSM

Sharing the
knowledge for
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Long COVID: what should you know?

Over the past three years, we have learned a lot about the COVID-19 virus. There continues to be a lot more to learn. We now know it can affect people in different ways. We think it can also affect some people for much longer than expected. These long-term symptoms and effects are being called "post-COVID conditions" or "long COVID." But there is a lot more to learn and understand about this set of symptoms. And what we believe we understand today may be different tomorrow.



What should you know about long COVID? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), long COVID can consist of many symptoms and different health issues. Here are some common long COVID symptoms:

- Fatigue (feeling extra tired)
- Fever
- Coughing or trouble breathing
- Heart symptoms like chest pain or racing heartbeat
- Loss of smell and/or taste

People have reported having symptoms for days, weeks, months, or even years. Symptoms might go away and come back. Your body may need extra time to heal fully. Illness from COVID-19 may precede new health problems, like diabetes. If you are still having possible COVID-19 symptoms four weeks after you got sick, tell your doctor. Find out from your doctor if treatment is needed. What is best for you will be based on the symptoms you have.

Continued on pg. 2



Long COVID can be frustrating. Getting COVID-19 does not mean you will have long COVID symptoms. Most people get better just like any viral infection. Those who got very sick from COVID-19 are more likely to feel long-lasting symptoms. Those who did not get the COVID-19 vaccine may also be more likely to have long COVID. Staying up-to-date with the vaccine is still the best way to not get the virus. For some people, research has linked the COVID-19 vaccine as an effective way to treat long COVID.

Still have questions about COVID-19? Talk to your doctor first. Also, you can always reach out to your program nurse!

Have you missed your medication?

Medicines can be an important part of staying healthy with your disease. You may need to take them daily, weekly, monthly or even every few months. However, you must take your medicines correctly. This means taking the right amount at the right time. Some medicines may need to be taken at a specific time, while others may need to be taken with food. Many medicines won't work as they should if you don't take them as directed.

Missing many doses may make your disease harder to treat. Your doctor and pharmacist should give you a treatment plan. This should include information about how and when to take your medicines. However, all of us may miss a dose here and there. This may be because you are traveling, or you may have misplaced your medicine or some other unintended reason.

What should you do if you do miss a dose?

- Do not take two doses to make up for what you have missed.
- Read all the information you are given. Some medicines may come with directions on what to do if you miss your regular dose.
- Contact your doctor and pharmacist as soon as you can. Your doctor can help you make an action plan about what to do next.

Here are some tips to help you keep track of your medication:

- Stay organized. You may use a pill container to track your daily doses. It may be helpful to create a routine. Try taking your medicine at the same time daily.
- Be current with your refills. You can do this by setting up a mail-to-order program with your pharmacy if possible. Or have all your prescriptions filled at one pharmacy all on the same day. This will keep you from running out of medicine.

- Set alarms and reminders. You can use your smart phone or an online calendar. There are also many other tools you can use online.
- Ask for help. If you are struggling, remember that you don't have to do it alone. Check in with your friends or family members to help you stay on track with your medicines.

If you miss a dose, don't be hard on yourself. Be honest and speak with your doctor as soon as you can.

NSAIDs: what you should know

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are used to treat pain and decrease swelling. They can be helpful in treating joint and muscle diseases and injuries. They also decrease fever. Some taken at a low dose each day can be good for your heart.

Most people know about common NSAIDs like ibuprofen (brand names Motrin®, Advil®), naproxen sodium (brand name Aleve®), and aspirin. Many NSAIDs can be bought off the shelf at a drug store or grocery store. Most come in pill form. But some can be bought as a cream to rub on your skin. Cough syrup and cold medicines may have NSAIDs in them.

Possible side effects of NSAIDs?

All medicines can cause side effects. NSAIDs work by stopping the enzymes your body uses to signal pain to the brain and nerves. They can also stop a similar enzyme your body needs to protect the lining of your stomach. When this happens, it can raise the risk for stomach problems like bleeding or sores (ulcers).

Most people won't have problems when they take NSAIDs the right way. It's important to use caution if you have a chronic illness like kidney disease or certain digestive disorders. Some other medicines do not work well with NSAIDs. Tell your doctor about all medicines you take. This includes any herbs, vitamins or supplements you may take. Your doctor can help you decide if an NSAID is right for you.

If you take NSAIDs, watch for stomach pain, bloody or dark coffee ground-looking vomit, and stools with blood or that appear black and tarry. Stop taking NSAIDs and call your doctor right away if this happens.