

LONG COVID

Background

Long COVID or post-COVID conditions (PCC) are broadly defined as signs, symptoms, and health conditions that continue or develop after initial SARS-CoV-2 infection. Those experiencing persistent or lingering symptoms four weeks or more after the initial phase of infection can be diagnosed. Signs and symptoms may be multisystemic, present with a relapsing-remitting pattern, and evolve over time. The condition can last weeks, months, or even years after infection. Anyone who has been infected with COVID-19 can struggle with the lingering symptoms of this condition so the importance of preventing the initial virus remains critical.

The wide variety and severity of symptoms can affect an individual's physical, cognitive, and mental health. The most reported symptoms include general fatigue and symptoms that worsen after exertion (both physical and mental). "Brain fog" or the cognitive state characterized by difficulty concentrating or thinking continues to be common. Other symptoms include:

- Memory issues
- Headache
- Sensory changes (e.g., pins and needles, change in smell or taste)
- Shortness of breath, cough
- Chest pain, heart palpitations
- Stomach pain, diarrhea
- Fever
- Muscle or joint pain

Management strategies and treatment for symptoms of long COVID can be similar to overlapping symptoms of other chronic conditions (e.g., POTS, concussion). Treatment addresses the loss of strength, function, fine motor, thinking and memory skills, as well as any other symptoms. Treatment is focused on the student's individual needs.



Top Takeaways for School Considerations

The determinations for eligibility services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 will be made on an individual basis for students experiencing long COVID or other conditions that have arisen because of COVID-19.

A student may require new or different related services, specialized instruction, or reasonable modifications based on current symptoms. Revisiting the IEP or 504 may be necessary.

School plans should focus on energy management (both physical and mental). Prioritizing, pacing, and planning will support energy demands for student success.

Symptoms can be new, returning, or ongoing making it important to have a dynamic school plan.

Considerations for the Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP)

- Nursing diagnosis of fatigue, impaired thought process and risk for injury
- Current diagnosed health condition including date of diagnosis, progress of disease process and other chronic health conditions
- Current medication and treatment orders (consider schedule, equipment needs and side effects)
- Activity, positioning, transferring (consider precautions and/or restrictions)
- Temperature regulation considerations in school setting and transportation
- Consider emergency care plan(s) (ECP) and emergency evacuation plan(s) (EEP) as related to medical needs in the school setting, and staff education/training, as appropriate

Discussion Starters for Educational Team

1. Would the student benefit from evaluations or assessments in any of the following areas: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, assistive technology, adapted physical education, functional behavior, psychology, hearing and vision?
2. Would the student benefit from additional academic support and/or modified education (e.g., copies of notes, extra time, reduced workload, simplified instructions, alternative formats for presentation of material, 504/IEP)?
3. Would schedule flexibility support the student?
4. Can rest breaks, safe spaces, or reduced stimulation times be built into the student's schedule?

Resources

Kennedy Krieger Institute: Pediatric Post-COVID-19 Rehabilitation Clinic
[kennedykrieger.org](https://www.kennedykrieger.org)

Long COVID Families
[longcovidfamilies.org](https://www.longcovidfamilies.org)

U.S. Department of Education: Long COVID under Section 504 and the IDEA
[sites.ed.gov/idea/files/ocr-factsheet-504-20210726.pdf](https://www.sites.ed.gov/idea/files/ocr-factsheet-504-20210726.pdf)



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[KennedyKrieger.org/HealthInformation](https://www.kennedykrieger.org/HealthInformation) for more information.