

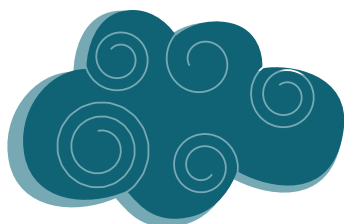
Living with Long COVID: *Brain Fog*

Brain fog refers to a range of symptoms involving the brain, such as feeling slow, finding it hard to think or concentrate, and experiencing confusion/forgetfulness. Nearly half of Long COVID patients report either poor memory or brain fog, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Brain fog doesn't just happen to patients who were sick enough to need a ventilator or hospital care—it can affect anyone who has been infected with COVID. Even people with only mild symptoms can develop long-term problems with attention, concentration, and memory.

"It changes how people think," said Dr. Maureen Lyons, who founded the Long COVID clinic at Washington University in St. Louis.

Long COVID brain fog affects people differently. Some have difficulty remembering, others aren't able to read a page of a book.

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Patients say:

"I couldn't remember things. I could go someplace and not remember where it was... I'd read something, and an hour later I couldn't remember what I'd read. My memory is bad and it's getting worse."

"My brain doesn't think like it used to...I used to multitask a lot; now my thoughts revolve around: Is it Monday? Is it Tuesday?"

"My memory of things from 3 days ago to 2 weeks ago is really fuzzy."

What to do if you are a Long COVID patient who is experiencing brain fog:

- See your doctor and share with them all of the lingering symptoms you are experiencing.
- Along with your doctor, decide on a way to manage your energy so you don't exceed your limits. Like other Long COVID symptoms, brain fog can get worse when patients exert themselves beyond their lowered capacity for physical or mental activity.
- Physical therapy can help to manage your energy.
- Use a notebook to create to-do lists and appointment dates and times.
- To clear brain fog, some doctors recommend activities known to help thinking and memory, like aerobic exercise*, a healthy diet, a good night's sleep, social activity, and avoidance of drugs and alcohol.

**Talk to your doctor before starting to exercise.*

What to do if you know someone with Long COVID and brain fog:

Offer your support. Experiencing brain fog can be confusing and frustrating, and can make people feel alone. To determine the most helpful steps you can take, first listen to patients with compassion and ask questions about what they need.



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