

NURSING MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH LONG HAUL COVID

More than half of adults diagnosed with COVID experience at least one or more symptom of Post-acute Sequelae of COVID (SARS-CoV-2 Infection) – also called “post-COVID” or “long haul COVID”, **even six months** after infection. These symptoms can occur in people who were infected and had mild symptoms or were completely asymptomatic. **These ongoing symptoms significantly affect quality of life.**



PHYSICAL WELL-BEING & SYMPTOMS

- Dyspnea
- Cough
- General functional impairment
- Fatigue
- Poor endurance
- Muscle weakness
- Myalgias & arthralgias
- Headache
- Smell and taste changes
- Hair loss
- Diarrhea
- Neuropathy



PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

- Difficulty concentrating
- Cognitive changes
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Depression
- Other mood alterations
- PTSD
- Sleep disorders



The Effect of Long Haul COVID on Quality of Life

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

- Financial burden
 - Loss of employment/income
 - Medical costs
- Access to healthcare and rehabilitation
- Caregiver burden
- Loss of usual roles and relationships



SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

- Uncertainty about future and loss of hope
- Why me?
- Stigma around infection



NURSING INTERVENTIONS



- **Conduct** a complete nursing assessment - Consider pre-existing and new co-morbidities
- **Actively** listen with compassion
- **Believe** the patient's report of symptoms and normalize that these are common, taking time to resolve
- **Address** symptoms - Weigh risks and benefits of pharmacologic management. Utilize nonpharmacologic strategies with attention to access, insurance coverage and cost.
- **Refer** to multimodal long haul COVID clinics if available
- **Engage** team members when specialty clinics not available: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical medicine & rehabilitation medicine, social work, psychology (including neuropsychology or neuropsychiatry), nutrition, pulmonology, integrative therapy
- **Connect** patients with support groups such as Survivor Corps (www.survivorcorps.com/) or Long COVID Alliance (longcovidalliance.org/)
- **Address** health disparities – long haul COVID appears to be more common in women; COVID disproportionately affects people of color

Therapies specific to treat long haul COVID symptoms have not yet been established.

In general, recommendations include:

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Healthy eating
- Stress management



REFERENCES

- CDC. Evaluating and caring for patients with post-COVID conditions: Interim guidance. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-care/post-covid-index.html
- Ferrell, BR & Grant M. Quality of life model. Duarte, CA: City of Hope National Medical Center. www.cityofhope.org/NRE
- Groff, D., et al, Short-term and long-term rates of postacute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection: A systematic review. JAMA Network Open, 2021; 4(10):32128568