Long COVID Assessment Clinic

The Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) has established a Long COVID Assessment Clinic to coordinate care for people experiencing continued symptoms.

What is Long COVID and what are its symptoms?

Ongoing symptoms have been seen regardless of how severe the initial infection with COVID-19 was. Some people experience symptoms from 4 to 12 weeks after initial symptoms onset. Long COVID, also known as Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC), describes a set of symptoms that continue beyond 12 weeks after the initial COVID-19 infection and cannot be explained by another medical issue.

Doctors are constantly learning about this condition which has a variety of different symptoms affecting many parts of the body. There is no medical definition or list of symptoms shared by all patients – two people with long COVID can have very different experiences.

The frequently seen symptoms include shortness of breath, cough, fatigue/exhaustion, concentration/memory issues, changes in mood – anxiety, depression, stress, loss of smell or taste, headache, sleep issues, heart pounding/palpitations/racing heart/chest pain, skin rashes, muscle aches and joint pains.

However, there are other symptoms being reported so this list may not include every symptom you experience. Your symptoms may have other causes besides long COVID.

What should I do if I having ongoing symptoms and am concerned I may have Long COVID?

Make an appointment with your regular doctor (GP and/or specialists) who can answer your questions and give you a check-up.

Many of these symptoms could be caused by other conditions, which medical professionals would expect to investigate and rule out first.

Most people make a full recovery, but it takes a variable length of time. Monitor your symptoms and seek help if you are not improving. Your regular doctor can help you with decisions around returning to work and other activities.
Information sheet for consumers

How to access the Long COVID Assessment Clinic?

General practitioners (GP) and specialists can refer patients with suspected Long COVID when symptoms have not resolved after 12 weeks.

Once referred and before an appointment can be scheduled your GP will

− organise for a chest x-ray where it is necessary and not contraindicated as COVID has been shown to have lasting effects on the lungs that are not immediately obvious.
− organise for blood tests to ensure that we have all the information available at your appointment.

Once we have received all the relevant information you will be contacted to organise an appointment.

What to expect at the Long COVID Assessment Clinic?

Before your first appointment with the clinic, a nurse and pharmacist will contact you to conduct an assessment over the phone. At your clinic appointment, your needs will be assessed, and recommendations will be made to help support your recovery.

This may involve referring you to other specialist or allied health services within CALHN. The Long COVID Assessment Clinic has specialist input from the following CALHN services: Respiratory, Cardiology, Neurology (including Memory), Pain Medicine, Ear Nose and Throat, Rheumatology, Renal medicine, Haematology, General Medicine, Clinical Pharmacology, Rehabilitation medicine, Physiotherapy, Exercise physiology, Psychology and Mental Health teams.

When you are ready for discharge from the service, you will be provided with a comprehensive care plan summarising all the recommendations made.

Resources for more information:

https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/support-for-rehabilitation-self-management-after-covid-19-related-illness