

Why road to recovery from Covid is getting longer

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Weakness, fatigue, sleeplessness and brain fogging are the most common symptoms people experience after recovering from Covid-19. Many claim that even a few minutes of work tires them out. They are unable to sleep much at night. Doctors told **TOI** that the trend of self-medication and approaching the doctor late after onset of symptoms is one of the reasons the post-Covid symptoms linger on for so long.

“Time is the biggest healer, and one should think one has already won a battle and restart living life in a positive manner,” advised Dr Neeraj Nischal, associate professor, department of medicine, AIIMS. “The flood of content in circulation on social media only adds to anxiety and sleeplessness. People who are recovering should form a social support group and seek help from counsellors or psychologists to channelise their thoughts.”

Asked why the symptoms were severe this time, as also the post-Covid recovery, Nischal said, “The disease is more severe now than last year, as are the symptoms. The virus is primarily a lung disease but it has the potential to affect the entire body because of the distribution of ACE2 receptors through which it gains entry into human cells. The dysregulation this causes takes time to stabilise.”

Doctors told **TOI** that serious complications after recovery are only seen in 1-2% of the cases. In some individuals, its more psychological than medical, the result of being bombarded with negative news or information related to Covid. “People who recover from Covid need to have a positive approach to resuming life after having won the battle. Popping vitamins is not the only way to boost immunity, eating a protein-enriched diet, fruits and exercise also help. Yes, don’t exert yourself, take one day at a time. Recovery is like a scar and will heal gradually,” said Nischal.

Dr Amitabh Parti, director, internal medicine, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon, concurred and additionally advised breathing exercise to recovered patients. “Brain fog and lack of focus are also seen in some cases. Another issue is insomnia. If patients who are recovering are constantly

surrounded by Covid-related talk or information, then the mind will be disturbed and a good night's sleep isn't possible," said Parti. "It's important to relax, keep your body hydrated and take time off social media and mobile phones."

Parti recommended conversations with family and friends, especially if the patient was alone. "Anxiety and depression are due to two reasons in the current circumstances," said Parti. "Either the individual has suffered Covid or has lost a family member to the coronavirus."

Experts pointed out that post-Covid symptoms were there during the first wave too but were now exhibiting more severe effects. "People are complaining of joint aches, body pains, headache, poor appetite, poor memory, mild cough and other problems," said Dr Rajesh Chawla, senior pulmonologist, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. "In some cases, it takes a month to recover fully, in others two months or more. The body needs time to heal. In my opinion keeping an eye on what you're eating and avoiding alcohol for a while also help."

Rajesh Mehta



BATTLING THE PANDEMIC

A DOCTOR SAYS

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