

Will School Infections Result in “Long Term” COVID?



As COVID-19 has made its way through communities, youth have luckily been spared the worst of the disease’s impact as studies show children only experience mild or no symptoms and have a high survivability rate when infected [1]. However, that doesn’t mean children are spared from experiencing long term health effects following the recovery of COVID-19. This condition, known as “long COVID”, was initially described in adults, but evidence that these symptoms develop in children is now forcing researchers to take a closer look on its impact to young individuals.

“It needs to be taken seriously”, noted Alok Patel, a pediatrician at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford, in a recent interview. **“Even though COVID itself—the acute infection—presented less severe in children, long COVID is very debilitating, isolating and scary for families.”** [2]

The effects can range from physical symptoms, such as shortness of breath, fatigue or even heart palpitations, but can also present as behavioral, including trouble concentrating or lack of participation in every day activities, potentially leading to lower-than-usual grades and decreased performance in athletics compared to their pre-COVID level.

Estimates of how common long COVID is in children vary, but the latest survey reported up to 40% of children in Italy and approximately 15 – 20% of children in England had at least one symptom two months after their COVID-19 diagnosis [3]. It is unclear yet how many children in the United States have been affected, but pinning this down is crucial because decisions on how to safely reopen schools can depend on an accurate assessment of the virus poses to children.

The best way to keep children from experiencing “long COVID” is to keep them from getting infected and limit their exposure to people who are contagious. With schools conducting in-person instruction and the now reduced use of masks and distancing in conjunction with kids being more likely to not show symptoms when infected, schools may prove to be the location where COVID-19 has the best chance of widespread infection. The most effective way to ensure an outbreak does not occur in schools is regular coronavirus testing of students and staff. Testing in schools is supported by government funds to help limit costs for school, can be less invasive and an extremely effective way to monitor the spread of COVID-19.

“Schools are now a major point of concern as centers for COVID-19 transmission, particularly with the new variants. Testing provides a critical early warning system and should be considered an essential part of every school’s prevention strategy.” – Manoj Gandhi, Senior Medical Director, Genetic Testing Division, Thermo Fisher Scientific

Comprehensive K-12 coronavirus testing can be quickly implemented in schools and supported by government funds. With pooled sampling to keep costs more efficient, swabbing done quickly by students themselves, and prepaid return shipping to the testing facility, this program is designed to make in-school coronavirus testing an easy reality for students, educators and parents alike. To learn more about how to implement a coronavirus testing program, [click here](#).

Sources

[1] <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/health/2021/07/14/delta-variant-kids-how-vaccinated-parents-can-weigh-covid-risks/7796332002/>

[2] <https://www.technologyreview.com/2021/07/13/1028419/heres-what-we-know-about-kids-and-long-covid/>

[3] <https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/HealthU/2021/05/19/how-covid-19-affects-kids-long-term/https://healthblog.uofmhealth.org/childrens-health/long-haul-covid-kids>