

Long Covid Clinics

This condition, which is thought to affect more than 60,000 people in the UK, can cause continuing fatigue, brain fog, breathlessness and pain.

One in ten people who get COVID-19 are still unable to shake off the side effects eight weeks after infection.

These new clinics will bring together doctors, nurses, therapists and other NHS staff to physical and psychological assessments of those experiencing enduring symptoms.

Ten sites have been earmarked for the Midlands, seven in the North East, six in the East of England, South West and South East respectively, five in London and three in the North West. We will let you know as soon as we have information about the local provision for the Milton Keynes area.

This service will be available to anyone suffering symptoms that are likely due to COVID-19, regardless of location or whether they have spent time in hospital. It is most likely that patients will access the service through their GP, but they could also be referred through another healthcare professional following assessment. It will provide doctors an opportunity to rule out any other possible underlying causes for symptoms, such as suspected stroke, lung cancers or respiratory conditions.

NHS Chief Executive Sir Simon Stevens said: "Long COVID is already having a very serious impact on many people's lives and could well go on to affect hundreds of thousands. That is why, while treating rising numbers of patients who are sick with the virus and many more who do not have it, the NHS is taking action to address those suffering ongoing health issues."

More recent evidence is also showing that long COVID can be categorised into four different syndromes: post intensive care syndrome, post viral fatigue syndrome, permanent organ damage and long term COVID syndrome.

'Your Covid Recovery' is an online rehabilitation service which provides personalised support to patients. Over 100,000 people have used the online hub since it launched in July.

<https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>

One of our Champions Caroline Wright has shared her story:

Our family contracted covid at the beginning of April, we were being very careful but we have no way of knowing how we caught it. It could have been as simple as bringing the bins in and the teenagers not washing their hands or going to the local shop and touching an item.

At the same time, we were also doing shopping for vulnerable people as part of the local community, as well as working long hours as there was so much to do with implementing Covid funding and year end. So, it could have been anything.

Initially I got it worst with a racking cough and flu like symptoms, my husband, daughter and one teenage son suffered flu like symptoms. These two teenagers recovered after two weeks. We had to call the ambulance service out a few times for me as I had chest pains (it was like a python squeezing your chest) and I could not breathe. MKUH were great and my temperature came down - I was so cold that I did not realise that I had a high temperature.

This cycle continued for a few months with constant visits to MKUH and both my husband and I had the worst fatigue that we have ever had - this lasted for months and we still have it now on and off. By the end of the week we are so exhausted – this is 8.5 months in.

We also got what we now know as brain fog, we thought we were losing it as it wasn't a known side effect at the time. Being an Accountant and having brain fog is not a good look. Then the earaches and muscle pains started for me. This was about 4 months in and around this time, the 18-year-old starting really suffering from fatigue and muscle pains - he was previously asymptomatic.

There have been times when I have wanted to rip parts of my body out with the pain. The doctor's at MKVP have been brilliant and I have broken down on them so many times with sheer frustration and fatigue. I normally have about three to four hours of broken sleep a night, due to the pain from my stomach and legs. I am awake around midnight, 2.00 and then finally 4.00am and that is me done for the night. The same with the 18-year-old.

As a family we have learnt to listen to our bodies, and we rest when we need to and we are on an immune free diet as far as possible. My manager, the rest of the senior management team and other colleagues, have been brilliant and I now work a 4-day week and am managing that most weeks, sometimes more, sometimes less. Then resting at the weekend. I have read over 220 books this year, in the early part all we could cope with was watching you tube videos as that was our attention span.

As a family we have a variety of symptoms – two of us, every so often, suffer with long Covid symptoms but these go really quickly, three of us are suffering from muscle aches, fatigue and two of us still can't walk more than around the block. My husband used to run marathons and that is all gone now - hoping that will come back. Our 18-year-old used to play American Football and referee teenage football. We range in age from 14 to 54. Our other children play football and our daughter is a competitive cheerleader, so none of them are unfit.

We have a saying in our house that our car can find its own way to MKUH as we are there that often.

In addition to the physical symptoms we are all, to various degrees, suffering from mental anguish, ranging from paranoia, obsessiveness, depression and anxiety.

So, in summary, long Covid can hit you no matter if you are overweight (like me) or very fit like my husband and children. It does not matter what age.

Facebook has been a god send to us - I have joined many Covid related groups to learn more but on one MK group I got chatting to Tina and we thought that we would start a group MK centric and surrounds. We have publicised it and have a few members have joined who are sharing their experience of ME where there are certain overlaps. Please if you have long Covid we would love it if you joined [Facebook Groups](#).

