

# Memory and Concentration Problems after COVID-19

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## What is “brain fog”?

“Brain fog” is a term that describes a set of problems related to memory, concentration, and thinking. It is the most common symptom affecting the nervous system after having COVID-19. It has been reported that up to 1 in 3 people who have COVID-19 will have brain fog 3 months after the illness. Symptoms of brain fog can vary from person to person, some common symptoms include:

- Problems paying attention
- Trouble finding the right word
- Difficulty remembering new things
- Trouble managing daily activities
- Difficulty in multitasking (doing more than one task at a time)

We are still learning about brain fog after COVID-19, so we are not quite sure how long it can last. What we do know is that symptoms can fluctuate - meaning you will have good and bad days and there are treatments to help.

## What is the treatment for COVID-related brain fog?

Your doctor can help you with memory and concentration problems. Talk with them if you are still having memory and thinking problems. For some people, this may go away without treatment. Others may need to see a specialist (called a neuropsychologist) to help. Your doctor can help decide what is best for you.

## What can I do?

Taking care of yourself is also important. You will have good days and bad days. Pay attention to what triggers you may have and practice good self-care. Here are a few steps you can take to overcome brain fog problems:

- Manage stress. And learning how to relax can help you remain calm even in stressful moments. Yoga and meditation can be particularly helpful.

- Share a list of your medications with your doctor. Together, you may be able to identify if a medication you are taking could be causing or adding to your problem.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. This includes getting enough sleep, staying active, and eating well.
- Keep a notebook to help you remember things.
  - Write down each task, how long it will take, and where you need to go.
  - Plan your whole day.
  - Keep it simple, and be realistic about how much you can do in a day.
  - Set up reminders. Put small signs around the house to remind you of things to do, such as taking out the trash or locking the door.
- Use memory aids, an example of this is:
  - Grouping long numbers into chunks. For example, the phone number 812-5846 can be repeated as “eight-twelve, fifty-eight, forty-six.”
- Talk yourself through tasks. When doing a task with several steps, such as cooking or working on a computer, whisper each step to yourself.
- Go over what you plan to say. Before you go to family events or work functions, go over names, dates, and key points you want to make.
- Repeat what you want to remember. Saying it a couple of times can help your mind hold on to the information.
- Seek support
  - Think about joining a support group for people who have recovered from COVID-19. They may have the same problems. You can share ideas.
  - See a therapist or a mental health professional. They can help you cope with the brain fog and may be able to help if you have underlying depression or anxiety. These problems can affect attention, concentration, and memory.

Following up with your doctor is a very important part of your health and safety. Do not miss any appointments and please call if you are having trouble. It is important that you know your medications and test results to help your doctor take better care of you

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