

Can the Omicron variant still cause long COVID?

It is too early for scientists to know much about the relationship between Omicron, vaccination and long Covid. Research from earlier in the pandemic does not yield definitive clues. Here is a sketch of what scientists have learned and the many questions still to be answered.

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Although recent reports suggest that Omicron may cause less severe initial illness than other variants, the basic symptoms of infection with Omicron are similar to infection with other variants, suggesting that long-term effects could also be similar.

Milder initial illnesses do not necessarily mean that Omicron is less likely to lead to long Covid, doctors, researchers and patient-led groups caution. Studies from earlier waves of the pandemic indicate that many people who had [mild](#) or [asymptomatic](#) initial reactions to coronavirus infection went on to develop long Covid that persisted for months.

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Akiko Iwasaki, an immunologist at Yale, [has said](#) that vaccines may be able to provide lasting relief in people whose symptoms are caused by vestiges of the virus if the antibodies generated by the vaccines eliminate those remnants.

But in people whose symptoms may be caused by a post-viral response resembling an autoimmune disease, she said, vaccines may help only temporarily and problems like fatigue could re-emerge.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)