

7-20 years older: Cognitive fog from COVID-19 causes damage, shrinking and accelerated aging of the brain

A study of people with mild to moderate COVID-19 showed significant prolonged inflammation of the brain and [changes that are commensurate with seven years of brain aging](#).

Severe COVID-19 that requires hospitalization or intensive care may result in cognitive deficits and other brain damage that are [equivalent to 20 years of aging](#).

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Most recently, a new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine [assessed cognitive abilities](#) such as memory, planning and spatial reasoning in nearly 113,000 people who had previously had COVID-19. The researchers found that those who had been infected had significant deficits in memory and executive task performance.

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In the same study, those who had mild and resolved COVID-19 showed cognitive decline equivalent to a three-point loss of IQ. In comparison, those with unresolved persistent symptoms, such as people with persistent shortness of breath or fatigue, had a six-point loss in IQ. Those who had been admitted to the intensive care unit for COVID-19 had a nine-point loss in IQ. Reinfection with the virus contributed an additional two-point loss in IQ, as compared with no reinfection.

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