

## 'This should be setting off alarms': Nearly 18 million Americans could be living with long COVID. What are the implications?

Some 6.8% of American adults are currently experiencing long Covid symptoms, according to a new survey from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), revealing an “alarming” increase in recent months even as the health agency relaxes Covid isolation recommendations, experts say.

That means an estimated 17.6 million Americans could now be living with long Covid.

“This should be setting off alarms for many people,” said David Putrino, the Nash Family Director of the Cohen Center for Recovery From Complex Chronic Illness at Mount Sinai. “We’re really starting to see issues emerging faster than I expected.”

When the same survey was conducted in October, 5.3% of respondents were experiencing long Covid symptoms at the time.

The 1.5 percentage-point increase comes after the [second-biggest surge of infections](#) across the US this winter, as measured by available wastewater data.

More than three-quarters of the people with long Covid right now say the illness limits their day-to-day activity, and about one in five say it significantly affects their activities – an estimated 3.8 million Americans who are now experiencing debilitating illness after Covid infection.

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The rise in long Covid cases is particularly worrisome because “we still don’t know all of the things that long Covid does, how it does it, and why,” said Lara Jirmanus, a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School and a member of the People’s CDC.

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