

Contact:
Robert Conner
Scott Circle Communications
rconner@scottcircle.com
267-423-5622



Neurological Long COVID Symptoms Guidance Statement Announced by the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

ROSEMONT, IL – May 16, 2023 – Today, the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) [announced new guidance for diagnosing and treating common symptoms of neurological complications from Long COVID](#).

Long COVID remains a long-term public health issue. New data suggests antiviral treatments for COVID-19 may help prevent Long COVID, but millions of Americans still suffer from symptoms of Long COVID.

Long COVID symptoms are varied, ongoing and are often experienced in clusters. The most common neurologic Long COVID symptoms include headaches, weakness, muscular numbness, pain, tremors and palsy.

“Identifying patients with progressive or ominous “red flag” neurological symptoms is essential for emergent triaging,” said Dr. Leslie Rydberg, co-author of the neurology Long COVID guidance statement. “These symptoms may be due to Long COVID versus another medical condition, but a history and physical examination is essential.” She added that patients should be evaluated if neurological symptoms are not improving one month after acute symptom onset.

Patients who seek earlier evaluation, diagnosis and symptom management can improve with beneficial interventions. Outpatient physical and occupational therapy benefits Long COVID patients, but there remain significant gaps in health equity for certain populations. Physiatrists see the whole patient AND the whole picture of the rehabilitation ecosystem and help individuals recover quicker and more fully. Because a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach may benefit rehabilitation, AAPM&R convened the [Multi-Disciplinary PASC Collaborative](#) to provide best practices from established Long COVID clinics in caring for patients with Long COVID.

These statements are part of a multidisciplinary collaborative consensus guidance series for the most predominant Long COVID symptoms, published in the *PM&R* Journal. The first consensus guidance on [fatigue](#) was released in August 2021, followed by guidance on [breathing discomfort](#) and [cognitive symptoms](#) in December, [cardiovascular complications](#) in June 2022 and [pediatrics](#) and [autonomic dysfunction](#) in September. An additional consensus guidance statement on Long COVID in mental health will be published next.

The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation is the national medical specialty organization representing more than 10,000 physicians specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation. PM&R physicians, also known as physiatrists, treat a wide variety of medical conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord, nerves, bones, joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons. PM&R physicians evaluate and treat injuries, illnesses and disability and are experts in designing comprehensive, patient-centered treatment plans. Physiatrists utilize cutting-edge as well as time-tested treatments to maximize function and quality of life. Since the beginning of 2021, AAPM&R has undertaken comprehensive efforts to support its call for a national plan to address PASC and the millions of Americans it affects.

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