

## Fall 2024

Hello BIDMC Long COVID Community,

Fall is here! With that seems to come a lot of decisions - how many layers of clothing to wear, what kinds of apples to pick, how many different pumpkin items can you consume, what preventative measures to take to protect yourself in Flu and RSV season, what to do if you get a new COVID infection, and so on. There are so many different things to think about - both fun and serious! Decision fatigue can weigh us down and make this season feel harder than ever. I hope the information in this edition helps provide more information on some of these decisions.

For what it's worth, my favorite apple is the Macoun!

Best,

Amberly Ticotsky, RN

## COVID Vaccines

Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax all have come out with updated COVID vaccines. Like the flu vaccine that changes every year based on current strains and what scientists are expecting based on the trends, the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to change every year and be recommended on an annual basis.

The updated 2024-25 COVID-19 vaccines target the newer variants which are descendants of the Omicron variant. COVID vaccines are not expected to prevent all cases of COVID, including those causing mild illness; rather, their aim is to reduce severe illness, hospitalization, and death from infection.

While we do recommend getting vaccinated, we realize the decision to receive a vaccine is a nuanced one taking into consideration previous reactions, upcoming plans, and more. I'm thankful that Novavax is an option this year and think it offers a nice option for people who have had severe side effects with the mRNA options.

[Yale Medicine put out an informative piece](#) comparing the different vaccines.

Katelyn Jetelina from *Your Local Epidemiologist* had a newsletter [with data and answers to common questions](#) around the shots for this fall.

## Upcoming Events

Long COVID can impact every area of life, which sometimes means the people around us too. Roles in family, friendships, and work have to change as we deal with the recovery journey of this illness, and sometimes loved ones are not sure how to support us. We are excited to offer a quarterly support group for those individuals. **Our first group will be held on Thursday, October 17, from 4-5pm, via Zoom.**

Share this with your loved ones! Anyone interested can rsvp by [emailing Jackie \(jfrench2@bidmc.harvard.edu\)](mailto:jfrench2@bidmc.harvard.edu). If you are interested but cannot make that day/time work, please reach out anyway so that we can be in touch.

Note: This quarterly group is made possible through a collaboration of the Brigham & Women's Hospital (BWH) & Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) COVID Recovery Programs.

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## Wellness Corner

With the return of "Germ Season", what considerations need to be taken in regards to COVID re-infections and the impact on Long COVID??

A [2022 survey](#) from the UK that was patient-led and included around 600 participants, demonstrated that 80% of people with Long COVID had their symptoms get worse after reinfection. 40% reported similar severity to prior infection, and 28% reported more severe symptoms. Yet, there is still little guidance on how people with Long COVID should treat new COVID infections.

Here's what we currently think: avoiding infection is the best way to avoid potential new or worsening symptoms. Even mild infections can impact Long COVID. Getting the 2024-2025 vaccine, choosing to mask, and making sure you have clean air are still the best things you can do for infection prevention. Washing hands is always a good idea too!

If you do get an infection, don't despair!

**Isolate:** Stay home for at least five days. Ideally, wait until you have a negative home test to get out of isolation, but if this isn't possible, mask when around others.

**Rest:** Let your body rest thoroughly. Lay flat to optimize blood flow. Pace your activities and exertion levels.

**Medicate:** Call your doctor right away to discuss Paxlovid. If you cannot take Paxlovid due to medication interactions or other health conditions, Molnupiravir is another anti-viral option. Be sure to ask your doctor about other medication options that may be available for you.

**Symptom Management:** Use other over-the-counter medications as needed and appropriate like acetaminophen or throat lozenges depending on your symptoms and other medical conditions.

**Nourish your body:** Stay hydrated with electrolytes. Eat foods that can help you feel better like chicken noodle soup, green leafy vegetables, and lean proteins. Avoid dairy if possible as it is harder to digest. You can also add some honey into your tea (or eat a spoonful!) as it has great antioxidant properties.

**Don't forget your mental health!** This could be a good time to try breathing techniques (shameless plug for the Sadhguru Center program!), and connect with friends or family over the phone. Connect with professionals if you need to.

Be sure to monitor your symptoms and seek urgent medical care if you are having difficulty breathing, new pain or pressure in your chest that isn't going away, you're more confused, or have any symptoms that you're concerned about.

## Long COVID Research at BIDMC

BIDMC continues to recruit patients for research studies looking at the impact of Long COVID. These include:

**CLEO Study:** Looking at the long-term effects of COVID-19, specifically how COVID can affect cardiovascular health. Contact [CLEO@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:CLEO@bidmc.harvard.edu) for more information or call **617-735-4124**.



**Mind-Body Study:** Evaluating a mind-body approach to reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life. The study is conducted entirely virtually. [www.longcovidstudy.net](http://www.longcovidstudy.net)

**NIH RECOVER Clinical Trials:** BIDMC is currently participating in the SLEEP and ENERGIZE clinical trials. Information can be found at: <https://trials.recovercovid.org/>. If you are interested in potentially participating, please email [BIDMC-Recover@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:BIDMC-Recover@bidmc.harvard.edu) or call **617-667-0173**.

To find out about additional research happening around you, visit our [research website](#).

There is a recruiting push for the **Sleep and Long COVID Study!** If you have been struggling with aspects of sleep, this could be a way to get some personalized sleep information and additional data while helping to support the important research work being done.

[Check out the flier](#) or contact the research team at **617-667-5243** or by email at [postviralsleep@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:postviralsleep@bidmc.harvard.edu).

## Long COVID Resources

[The Sadhguru Center for a Conscious Planet](#) is doing some really great work at BIDMC, in general and for patients with Long COVID. Those with a variety of Long COVID symptoms including: shortness of breath, fatigue, and mental health challenges, are welcome and encouraged to join the program. You do not need any prior experience to be able to learn the breathing techniques and meditation in this program. The practices you will learn are safe and simple, and you will be guided by a trained expert to do them properly. The workshops are free 60 minute workshop, and you can sign up as per your schedule.

The program is conducted in English, and workshops will take place online via Zoom at various times throughout the week.

[Click here for the sign up sheet](#)

## Reminders

If you are living with Long COVID, your insights and recommendations are very important. We would love your help identifying resources that have been helpful. Whether it's a specific doctor who understands the intricacies of Long COVID, a support group that offers emotional and practical assistance, or treatments and therapies that have made a significant difference, your suggestions can provide much-needed guidance to others navigating this complex and often isolating condition.

This living spreadsheet will be available in Dropbox. Be sure to check all the tabs along the bottom. Thank you for your contributions!

### [Long COVID Patient Recommendations](#)

**Please note:** this resource is for patients by patients. The spreadsheet is not vetted or endorsed by BIDMC or the Long COVID Collaborative.

#### **Order your 4 free COVID tests today!**

Every household in the U.S. is eligible to receive 4 rapid COVID tests free of charge. Ordering them is quick and easy! <https://covidtests.gov/>

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[Visit our Critical Illness & COVID-19 Survivorship Website](#)

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