19 Reasons to Care about Covid-19 for Life

Neither complete nor uplifting, this list is intended to combat ignorance and spur curiosity about where to focus our efforts to promote recovery and resilience. (Sources on the following page.)

1. There is no such thing as a “mild” case of Covid in part because each infection damages blood vessels: arteries, veins, and capillaries.
2. Even a “mild” case of Covid can cause measurable loss of brain tissue and cognitive decline – equivalent to roughly 1 to 10 years of extra brain aging, depending on the region affected.
3. Anyone infected with Covid is at higher risk for heart issues (arrhythmias, inflammation, clots). This risk persists in healthy people long after illness, for a year or longer.
4. Covid can directly infect the arteries of the heart and inflame fatty plaque inside arteries.
5. People who have had Covid have an increased risk for (new-onset) diabetes, which is the most significant single contributor to cardiovascular disease.
6. Anyone, including children, can develop Long Covid regardless of the initial severity.
7. A majority of people with persisting symptoms after Covid had a “mild” infection.
8. More than half of Covid transmission comes from people who have no symptoms at the time.
9. A meta-analysis found long-term effects of asymptomatic Covid infection.
10. Each time a person gets Covid, the risk of long-term complications increases, rather than decreases, regardless of vaccination status.
11. Almost 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. has a health condition linked to or worsened by Covid.
12. Covid in children and adolescents is linked to a higher risk for chronic kidney disease and kidney function decline, especially in those with preexisting conditions.
13. Covid increases the risk of autoimmune diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and inflammatory bowel disease.
14. Global pooled Long Covid prevalence was 36% based on a meta-analysis of 429 studies.
15. Covid is linked to measurable, lasting cognitive deficits – in memory, reasoning, and executive function – that can persist a year or more, even after a mild infection.
16. Covid increases the risk of pulmonary embolism for months after infection.
17. Covid can cause measurable immune system dysfunction that persists for months.
18. Covid can persist for months after infection in the brain, heart, gut, and blood vessels.
19. By 2024, the estimated global incidence of Long Covid was more than 400 million people.

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