

Long-term effects of COVID-19

In November 2022, a total of 42% of adults declared that they had suffered from COVID-19 at least once. More than a third of respondents who had suffered from COVID-19 (36%) have experienced some chronic health ailments which, in their opinion, can be attributed to the past infection. Almost three-fifths (59%) passed the disease without any chronic health effects or long-term post-COVID-related ailments. The negative long-term effects of COVID-19 are much more often reported by women (45%) than men (25%). Post-covid-related ailments have been experienced more often by older people: among people over 65 years of age, more than half (52%) have experienced such ailments.

After the coronavirus infection, have you experienced any chronic health ailments associated with this disease?

Answers of people who had suffered from COVID-19 (N=441)



Respondents who had suffered from COVID-19 and subsequently developed chronic health ailments related to this disease were asked in an open question about their characteristics. According to the responses obtained, the long-term effects of COVID-19 are manifested

primarily in a noticeable decrease in the body performance, i.e. chronic fatigue, weakness, exhaustion, and general drowsiness, indicated by 38% of those experiencing some ailments after COVID-19. More than one-fifth of convalescents (22%) have complained of major or minor ailments of the respiratory system, e.g. shortness of breath, feeling of lack of air, shallow breathing or shortness of breath, or pneumonia. The same percentage (22%) have experienced some kind of neurological ailment, manifested primarily by cognitive impairment. These respondents spoke of a sense of dullness, the so-called covid fog, i.e. memory disorders or loss, difficulty concentrating or increased nervousness. Relatively frequent effects of COVID-19 (17%) are various problems with the upper part of the respiratory system, including: long-term cough, chronic runny nose, sinus pain, sore throat, tonsillitis or a general feeling of obstructed upper respiratory tract. A similar percentage (16%) have complained about problems related to the osteoarticular system: paresis of some parts of the body, pain in the joints, bones, spine, muscles, limbs, orthopaedic ailments or general difficulties in moving and mobility limitations. One-tenth of those who feel some long-term consequences of coronavirus infection (10%) have experienced a disorder or complete loss of smell and taste. In addition, there was talk of a general decrease in immunity, recurrent infections or chronic diseases (6%), headaches or dizziness (5%), problems with the digestive system, lack of appetite, abdominal pain or kidney problems (4%). Based on the declarations, the rare long-term effects of coronavirus infection i.a. include: visual impairment (3%), cardiac ailments, increased blood pressure, arrhythmia (2%), hair loss, alopecia (2%), insomnia (2%), hearing impairment, hearing loss (2%).

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Coronavirus Epidemic and the Long-term Effects of COVID-19 Infection", December 2022. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2022, N=1038. The random sample is representative for adult population of Poland.