Long COVID and ME/CFS current awareness bulletin

September 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice on Long COVID and ME/CFS

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Guidelines, Policies and Reports

ME/CFS Tube Feeding Survey Report
British Association of Clinicians in ME/CFS, September 2026
Available at: British Association of Clinicians in ME/CFS
Although only a small proportion of people with ME/CFS require tube feeding, this survey highlights wider issues relating to the recognition and management of nutritional compromise, with important implications for clinical practice and service provision. The survey was undertaken to better understand these experiences and to inform the development of future clinical guidance in an area where there is currently little ME/CFS-specific evidence or guidance for healthcare professionals.

Published Research

An interpretative phenomenological analysis study of perceptions around factors relating to coping amongst young people with Long Covid and mental health difficulties in the UK
Health Psychology Open, August 2026
Available at: Sage Journals
The nature and causes of neuropsychiatric symptoms in children and young people (CYP) with Long Covid are debated in current research. This study explored CYP perceptions of their mental health difficulties in association with Long Covid diagnoses.

Beyond genes: EpiSwitch® and Orion platform-powered 3D genome architecture biomarkers reveal shared biology across ME/CFS, long COVID, PTSD, rheumatoid arthritis, and multiple sclerosis
Journal of Translational Medicine, August 2026
Available at: Springer
These findings support a systems-level model in which clinically overlapping fatigue-associated syndromes arise from perturbations of interconnected regulatory networks rather than discrete disease-specific pathways. Despite limited genetic overlap, substantial convergence at the network level suggests shared biological architecture across ME/CFS, LC19, PTSD, RA, and MS.

Cardiovascular, Renal, and Pulmonary Risks of Long COVID: A Retrospective Cohort Study Stratified by Age and Sex
Journal of the American Heart Association, Volume 15, Number 17

Available at: American Heart Association Journals
Clinically recognized Long COVID was associated with increased risk of cardiovascular, renal, and pulmonary outcomes, with relatively higher relative risks observed in younger adults. These findings support the need for continuing surveillance and risk-reduction strategies for cardiovascular and related disorders in Long COVID.

Editorial: Unraveling the biological mechanisms of chronic fatigue: a multifaceted approach
Frontiers in Medicine, July 2026
Available at: Frontiers
Chronic fatigue, and myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) in particular, remain without a validated diagnostic marker or a treatment. The post-COVID rise in post-viral fatigue has further widened the gap between clinical need and mechanistic understanding. This Research Topic brings together studies that examine chronic fatigue across several biological levels.

Exercise and Cardiovascular Risk Modulation in Post-COVID Syndrome
Current Atherosclerosis Reports, August 2026
Available at: Springer
Post-COVID syndrome (PASC) has emerged as a multisystem condition associated with persistent cardiovascular abnormalities. This review summarizes the current evidence regarding the pathophysiological mechanisms linking PASC to cardiovascular disease and discusses the potential role of exercise training as a strategy to mitigate vascular dysfunction and cardiovascular risk.

Exploring long covid care pathways in the UK NHS: a qualitative study of healthcare professionals' experiences
BMJ Open, September 2026
Available at: BMJ
This study aimed to explore the operational reality of the long covid care pathway from the perspective of NHS professionals, addressing the gap between national guidelines and frontline implementation. While national guidelines provide best practices, this study uniquely captures the systemic bottlenecks that occur when operationalising these standards locally.

NeuroCOVID Burden and Functional Impairment in Adults with Long COVID: A Secondary Analysis of an Italian Cohort
Journal of Clinical Medicine, August 2026
Available at: MDPI
Long COVID is frequently characterized by neurological, cognitive, neuropsychiatric, and autonomic symptoms (NeuroCOVID). However, their impact on daily functioning remains insufficiently investigated. This study evaluated the association between NeuroCOVID burden and functional impairment among Italian Long COVID survivors.

Nirmatrelvir–ritonavir targeting viral persistence in post-COVID-19 condition (long COVID) in the USA (RECOVER-VITAL): a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase 2 trial
The Lancet Infectious Diseases, September 2026
Available at: The Lancet
Post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection, more commonly known as long COVID, has emerged as a major health problem. The pathogenesis of long COVID is unknown,

but among the leading hypotheses is viral persistence. We aimed to investigate whether the use of the SARS-CoV-2 antiviral nirmatrelvir–ritonavir improved long COVID symptoms.

Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome in adolescents with ME/CFS - a case control study
Frontiers in Pediatrics, September 2026
Available at: Frontiers
Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (PoTS) can be associated with ME/CFS. Pediatric PoTS requires a "sustained" rise in orthostatic heart rate ≥40 bpm above supine heart rate, often >120 bpm. However, the diagnostic criteria for PoTS in adolescents remain underexplored, particularly regarding the definition of "sustained" tachycardia, which poses challenges in clinical and research settings. This study examined orthostatic intolerance criteria, including PoTS, in adolescents with ME/CFS and healthy controls.

Shifting focus to phenotypes: the evolution of long COVID rehabilitation
ERJ Open Medicine, August 2026
Available at: PMC
Modern long COVID rehabilitation must go beyond improving exercise capacity. It must serve as behavioural and physiological mediator enabling the “adaptive middle ground”: a precise zone of symptom-titrated activity to navigate sustainable recovery.

Total blood volume and red blood cell volume are not associated with orthostatic intolerance in adults with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome
Psychological Reports, September 2026
Available at: Wiley
Orthostatic intolerance is common in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and may worsen daily functioning. Although hypovolemia has been proposed as a contributor, its relationship to objective orthostatic abnormalities remains uncertain. We examined whether measured blood-volume abnormalities were associated with standardized lean-test outcomes.

Blogs

Abandoned, dismissed and gaslighted: there is no excuse for the way ME sufferers have been betrayed
The Guardian, September 2026
Available at: The Guardian
Changes in guidance and science seem to have little impact on millions of devastated lives. It’s a shocking social crisis playing out behind closed doors.

When do infections lead to long COVID? Scientists close in on triggers and treatments for post-viral syndromes
Nature, September 2026
Available at: Nature [email ulth.library.lincoln@nhs.net to request full article]
Hundreds of millions of people have long-term conditions as a result of an infection. Researchers are working out how to help them. Several possible mechanisms are being investigated, including viral persistence/reactivation, immune-system dysfunction and inflammation, and changes to other body systems.