

[IMAGE]

Reducing Long COVID Risk

By Editorial Staff

Remember when COVID gripped the international headlines? Now it's *long COVID*, a constellation of post-infection symptoms that can be more troubling (and definitely longer lasting) than the initial infection. Fortunately, as research reveals the reality of long COVID, it also offers a potential path for preventing it.

The solution: a healthy lifestyle. According to new research, a healthy lifestyle *prior* to infection can lower the risk of long COVID. Among nearly 2,000 women who reported a positive SARS-CoV-2 test from April 2020 to November 2021, risk of long COVID was inversely related to a healthy lifestyle prior to infection (healthier lifestyle = lower risk and vice versa).

"Healthy lifestyle" was defined as adherence to six behaviors: healthy body mass index, never smoking, high-quality diet, moderate alcohol intake, regular exercise, and adequate sleep; assessed by patient self-reporting. The more healthy lifestyle habits, the better in terms of risk reduction.

Compared with women who adhered to zero healthy lifestyle behaviors, women who adhered to 5-6 had a 49% lower risk of post-COVID syndrome (long COVID). Writing on their findings in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, the research team stated: "If these associations were causal, 36.0% of PCC [post-COVID condition] cases would have been prevented if all participants had 5 to 6 healthy lifestyle factors."

Take a look at the six healthy lifestyle factors listed above. What's your 0-6 score? If it's less than 5-6, there's no better time to change your lifestyle for the better. You'll reduce your risk of long COVID (and COVID complications, based on previous research involving BMI / weight in particular). An even bigger added benefit: You'll also be healthier, hopefully happier, and reduce your risk of developing multiple other health conditions. A win-win-win for your health and wellness!

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