

A Selection of Accessible Covid-19 Resources

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These resources have been gathered with the intention of providing up-to-date, research-based materials from a variety of sources that are accessible to a non-specialist audience. (Many have further links to the research studies they reference, for those who wish to engage more with these more-technical sources.)

1. Covid-19: Useful data
2. Preventing Covid and its consequences
3. Risks and impacts of Covid infection
4. Covid and specific health conditions (including long Covid)
5. Effects of the pandemic and university practices on faculty and students

1. Covid-19: Useful data

- *COVID-19 Resources Canada*. (Updated regularly; bilingual.)
<https://covid19resources.ca/covid-hazard-index/>

A grassroots initiative bringing together data on a wide range of Covid-related topics, including a hazard index, excess-mortality tracker, and vaccine-hesitancy analysis.

2. Preventing Covid and its consequences

Protection from variants

- “FAQ on COVID-19 subvariant XBB.1.5: What is it? Where is it prevalent? How does it differ from Omicron? Does it cause serious illness? How can I protect myself? Why is it nicknamed ‘Kraken’?” by Sameer Elsayed (Western University). *The Conversation*. January 16, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/faq-on-covid-19-subvariant-xbb-1-5-what-is-it-where-is-it-prevalent-how-does-it-differ-from-omicron-does-it-cause-serious-illness-how-can-i-protect-myself-why-is-it-nicknamed-kraken-197602>

Information on the XBB.1.5 variant, which has been in wide circulation in Canada; it will form the basis of the forthcoming (fall) Covid vaccines.

Vaccines

- “How boosters produce broad protection against COVID-19.” *National Institutes of Health: NIH Research Matters*. May 23, 2023. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/varied-boosters-produce-broad-protection-against-covid-19>

A short article from the US NIH, discussing how boosters protect against Covid variants.

- “Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in the fall of 2023.” *National Advisory Committee on Immunizations* (NACI, Canada). July 11, 2023. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-guidance-use-covid-19-vaccines-fall-2023.html>

Government information about best practices for Covid vaccination for fall 2023. (Varys in level/technicality throughout.)

Masking

- “How well do masks protect against COVID-19?” Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-mask/art-20485449>

Easy-to-understand information on mask types and usage.

- “Masks are effective but here's how a study from a respected group was misinterpreted to say they weren't,” by Mary Kekatos (science and health journalist). *ABC News*. March 14, 2023. (With accompanying video story on mask types.) <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/masks-effective-study-respected-group-misinterpreted/story?id=97846561>

A news article countering myths about masks’ effectiveness.

Air purification

- “How a nondescript box has been saving lives during the pandemic – and revealing the power of grassroots innovation,” by Douglas Hannah (Boston University). *The Conversation*. March 3, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/how-a-nondescript-box-has-been-saving-lives-during-the-pandemic-and-revealing-the-power-of-grassroots-innovation-176779>

Overview of the simple, do-it-yourself ‘Corsi-Rosenthal box’, a useful tool for improving air quality.

Anti-viral treatment

- “Paxlovid reduces risk of long-term health problems, death from COVID-19” by Kristina Sauerwein (medical journalist). *Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis*. March 23, 2023. <https://medicine.wustl.edu/news/paxlovid-reduces-risk-of-long-term-health-problems-death-from-covid-19/>

Information on the anti-viral drug Paxlovid, which can significantly cut the risk of hospitalization, death, and long Covid if taken during the first few days of a Covid infection.

3. Risks and Impacts of Covid Infection

The following sources are meant to help with risk assessment and understanding of general patterns of Covid’s impacts on the population.

- “Ageism and the pandemic: How Canada continues to let older adults suffer and die from COVID-19” by Dawn M.E. Bowdish (McMaster University). *The Conversation*. April 2, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/ageism-and-the-pandemic-how-canada-continues-to-let-older-adults-suffer-and-die-from-covid-19-201630>

An analysis, by the Canada Research Chair in Aging and Immunity, of the ongoing impacts of Covid on older adults’ health and longevity.

- “COVID-19 is a leading cause of death in children and young people in the US.” *University of Oxford: News*. January 31, 2023. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2023-01-31-covid-19-leading-cause-death-children-and-young-people-us>

A short article reviewing research findings on death rates among American children from Covid.

- “SARS-CoV-2 and ‘Textbook’ Immunity.” *The John Snow Project*. May 6, 2023. <https://johnsnowproject.org/primers/textbook-immunity/>

A critical article grounding our understanding of Covid in our larger body of established scientific knowledge; also addresses misunderstandings of the ‘hygiene hypothesis’ in relation to illness risk.

4. Covid and specific health conditions (including long Covid)

These sources provide information on some of the major health issues now known to be linked with prior Covid infection.

Heart and vascular health

- “COVID and the Heart: It Spares No One,” interview with Ziyad Al-Aly (VA, St. Louis Health Care). *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*. March 14, 2022. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2022/covid-and-the-heart-it-spare-no-one>

Discusses findings suggesting that even otherwise-healthy people who are experience mild Covid infections are at increased risk for heart and vascular issues.

- “Is Coronavirus a Disease of the Blood Vessels?” by Phoebe Kitscha (BHF). *British Heart Foundation*. May 12, 2023: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/news/coronavirus-and-your-health/is-coronavirus-a-disease-of-the-blood-vessels>

Accessibly written material by a cardiologist, addressing Covid as a vascular illness and the serious health risks that follow from this.

- “Even mild COVID raises the chance of heart attack and stroke: What to know about the risks ahead,” by Clare Arnott and Bruce Neal (George Institute for Global Health) and Jamie Cham (University of Sydney). *The Conversation*. September 19, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/even-mild-covid-raises-the-chance-of-heart-attack-and-stroke-what-to-know-about-the-risks-ahead-190552>

Discussion of research findings on the cardio-vascular risks following Covid infection.

Diabetes

- “COVID-19 tied to higher diabetes risk—but vaccination helps” by Sara Berg (science writer, AMA). *American Medical Association*. April 20, 2023. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/covid-19-tied-higher-diabetes-risk-vaccination-helps>

Type-II diabetes risk rises with Covid infection, but vaccination prior to infection appears to offer some protection.

- “COVID-19 Omicron infection linked to new-onset diabetes” by Mary Van Beusekom (science journalist, CDRAP). *Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy*. February 14, 2023. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/covid-19-omicron-infection-linked-new-onset-diabetes>

Research data suggest an elevated risk of diabetes and other metabolic conditions follows infection with the Omicron variant.

Immune system damage

- “Getting COVID-19 Could Weaken Your Immune System” by Alice Park (health and medicine journalist, TIME). *TIME*. March 27, 2023. <https://time.com/6265510/covid-19-weaken-immune-system/>

An article reviewing what is known and unknown about T-cell immunity and the impacts of Covid-19, including the role of Covid vaccines.

- “COVID-19: Study Suggests Long-term Damage to Immune System” by Kevin Kavanagh (Health Watch USA). *Infection Control Today*. March 21, 2023. <https://www.infectioncontrolday.com/view/covid-19-study-suggests-long-term-damage-immune-system>

Discussion of immune system impacts, immune dysfunction, and ‘long COVID’, including the value of regular Covid boosters.

Fungal diseases

- “Fungal Diseases and COVID-19.” *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. March 2, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/covid-fungal.html>

Overview of Covid-associated fungal infections, with links to specific studies.

Neurological and psychological health

- “Even mild COVID can cause brain shrinkage and affect mental function, new study shows” by Sarah Hellewell (Curtin University). *The Conversation*. March 7, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/even-mild-covid-can-cause-brain-shrinkage-and-affect-mental-function-new-study-shows-178530>

Discussion of selected research on mental function and brain size following Covid-19.

- “Post-COVID psychosis occurs in people with no prior history. The risk is low but episodes are frightening” by Sarah Hellewell (Curtin University). *The Conversation*. March 22, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/post-covid-psychosis-occurs-in-people-with-no-prior-history-the-risk-is-low-but-episodes-are-frightening-179193>

Exploration of selected cases of a rare but serious Covid-related neurological issue.

Parkinson’s Disease

- “ECU researchers find possible link between COVID-19, Parkinson’s disease” by Benjamin Abel, East Carolina University). *East Carolina University*. August 4, 2022. <https://news.ecu.edu/2022/08/04/covid-parkinsons-link/>

Some preliminary research identifying possible links between Covid infection and an elevated risk of Parkinson’s Disease and Parkinson’s-like conditions.

Cancer

- “Cancer as a prospective sequela of long COVID-19” by Geetanjali Saini and Ritu Aneja (George State University). *Bioessays*. June 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms24097803>

Preliminary research discussing the possibility of Covid-19 infection as a potential cancer risk through its creation of an “oncogenic environment.”

‘Long Covid’ (or Post-Covid Conditions – PCC)

- “Here’s What We Know About Long COVID, Three Years Later,” featuring interviews with Hannah Davis (Patient-Led Research Collaborative) and Bhupesh Prusty (Institute for Virology and Immunobiology, University of Würzburg). *Science Friday* podcast (17 mins), with link to transcript. January 27, 2023.
Podcast: <https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/long-covid-review-study-ms/>
Transcript: <https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/long-covid-review-study-ms/#segment-transcript>

An accessible overview of ‘Long Covid’ science from researchers in podcast format.

- “Why isn’t anyone talking about who gets long COVID?” featuring interview with epidemiologist Margot Gage Witvliet (Lamar University). *Don’t Call Me Resilient* podcast / *The Conversation* (with link to transcript). November 16, 2022.
Podcast: <https://theconversation.com/why-isnt-anyone-talking-about-who-gets-long-covid-podcast-191659>
Transcript: <https://dont-call-me-resilient.simplecast.com/episodes/long-covid/transcript>

An interview addressing the racial and gender disparities in long-Covid rates and experiences, from an epidemiologist who studies and is living with long Covid.

- “‘Brain fog’ of long Covid comparable to ageing 10 years, study finds” by Geneva Abdul (journalist). *The Guardian* (UK). July 21, 2023.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/21/long-covid-brain-fog-ageing-10-years-study>

Recent findings on the enduring cognitive impacts of Covid.

- “COVID causing long-term health problems for many young people: ‘I felt so defeated’” by Libby Smith (journalist). *CBS News*. May 12, 2023. (With accompanying video story.) <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/covid-long-term-health-problems-young-people-national-jewish-health/>

Feature story focusing on one young person living with long Covid.

- “US National Institutes of Health Study Finds Increased Risk of Long Covid After Reinfection.” *The John Snow Project*. June 1, 2023. <https://johnsnowproject.org/primers/nih-study-finds-increased-risk-of-long-covid-after-reinfection/>

A brief article on a National Institutes of Health (NIH) study, which found the risk of long Covid after infection by SARS-CoV-2 variant Omicron is approximately 10%, with a rate after *reinfection* of close to 20%.

- “Where Are the Treatments for Long COVID?” by Liz Highleyman (health journalist). *Slate*. May 8, 2023. <https://slate.com/technology/2023/05/long-covid-treatments-where-research-recover.html>

The challenges and urgency of finding effective treatments for long Covid.

5. Effects of the pandemic and university practices on faculty and students

- “Why it’s wrong to blame online learning for causing mental health issues during COVID-19,” by George Veletsianos (Royal Roads University), Michael Barbour (Touro University), and Stephanie Moore (University of New Mexico). *The Conversation*. November 7, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/why-its-wrong-to-blame-online-learning-for-causing-mental-health-issues-during-covid-19-191493>

An analysis of the flaws in research claims that online learning harms mental health.

- “Pandemic Spectres in the Classroom” webinar videorecording (58 mins), featuring Rachel Hurst (St. Francis Xavier University). *Maple League of Universities*. April 26, 2023. <https://youtu.be/vC2ABrOAv4Y>

A gender-studies scholar explores how an emphasis on a “return to normal” can harm students and educators, and how we can rethink our framing and practices.

- “Same Old New Normal: The Ableist Fallacy of ‘Post-Pandemic’ Work,” by Alexandra “Xan” C. H. Nowakowski. *Social Inclusion* vol. 11, no. 1 (January 2023): 16–25.
<https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v11i1.5647>

A medical educator addresses the ableism embedded in the push to return to “business as unusual” while the pandemic continues, and how we can create accessible and just alternatives.