



One-Stop-Shop for Evidence, Advice and Support on Nutrition and COVID-19 Recovery

Professor Mary Hickson, Professor of Dietetics, University of Plymouth, on behalf of the Nutrition and Covid-19 Recovery Team*

COVID-19 infection has left millions of people with one or more symptoms during the recovery phase. Current best estimates are that between 10% and 35% for people ill at home and up to 80% for those hospitalised.¹ Many of these symptoms affect nutritional status and can be addressed with dietary strategies.^{2,3,4} Symptoms may directly impact what and how much people eat – breathlessness and coughing, taste changes, and gut symptoms – while others impact diet indirectly – loneliness, depression and pain. Other symptoms may affect a person’s ability to manage their diet – fatigue, brain fog, social isolation. Older people are a particularly vulnerable group because they are more likely to have other long-term conditions, and are also at greater risk of malnutrition. Good nutrition and diet are very important aspects of recovery for all.

The Nutrition and COVID-19 Recovery Knowledge Hub

Plymouth University’s Nutrition and COVID-19 recovery knowledge hub has been developed, in consultation with patients and professionals, to inform future nutritional care of patients with COVID-19. A UK-wide team – drawing from University of Plymouth, Bournemouth University, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, UCL Hospital NHS Trust, Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Trust and Imperial College London – has been working for more than a year to create this hub, which was funded by the BDA General Education Trust. You can access it here: www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/dietetics-and-health/covid-knowledge-hub

The Knowledge Hub brings together evidence and resources to support nutritional care post-COVID-19, which covers ongoing symptomatic infection and post-COVID-19 syndrome – but doesn’t tackle acute care. Aimed at health professionals, social care professionals and trusted services – as well as the public – it is the first online hub of its kind, gathering a range of resources that have undergone quality checks.

For patients, the hub provides tools to self-assess dietary habits, solutions for the effect of symptoms on nutritional status, aids for understanding evidence, and signposts to relevant, reliable and research-informed content to help decrease the negative impact that COVID-19 has on people’s nutrition. It also helps people find tailored personalised nutritional advice from dietitians and registered nutritionists.

It signposts to many other resources, support groups and nutrition related apps hence empowering people, and their carers, to gather all the information they need around nutrition post-COVID-19.

The professional pages have been set up in line with usual clinical treatment procedures:

- identifying problems,
- assessing them,
- provide advice,
- monitoring these problems.

There is more detail on symptoms and their treatment, with references, and information on operational challenges for delivering nutritional care.

Integral to all the pages are a series of recorded lectures, hosted by the University of Plymouth, about Nutrition and COVID-19, which were attended by hundreds of people nationwide. These were first made available in the summer of 2021, and include Professor Philip Calder (immunologist) answering the question of whether an anti-inflammatory diet exists, Dr Sarah Berry (nutrition scientist) sharing dietary data from the COVID-19 symptoms study, Hannah Hunter (dietitian) discussing how to monitor dietary symptoms, Chandanee Kotecha (clinical psychologist) discussing impacts on mental health and getting the best out of health professionals, and Elaine Anderson (dietitian) talking practically about managing symptoms and diet.

These talks are free to watch at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/dietetics-and-health/covid-knowledge-hub/nutrition-and-covid-19-recovery-talks

They are a great resource to help educate people around nutrition and diet and support them in tackling food fads and dietary myths.

Looking ahead

The task ahead is to keep the Knowledge Hub up-to-date and relevant in this rapidly changing field. Currently the team are reviewing literature from mid-2021 to the present, and setting up systems to keep abreast with current evidence. Relevant papers are reviewed and the content is changed in line with any new findings.

The Knowledge Hub is all about nutrition but aimed at patients, carers and professionals. It is endorsed by the BDA, the Royal College of Occupational Therapy, Royal Pharmaceutical Society, BAPEN and Kirklees Council in Scotland. We are waiting for responses from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Royal College of General Practitioners, and the Royal College of Nursing. This is a resource for dietitians but also for your patients and colleagues.

If you have used the Knowledge Hub and like it (or not) we are very happy to hear your feedback. Some things are due to the limitations of the website format, which frustrate us too. We are particularly keen to hear of great resources that could be included to help patient or professionals. Please contact Abigail Tronco Hernandez - abigail.troncohernandez@plymouth.ac.uk if you have any thoughts or comments.

*Nutrition and Covid-19 Recovery Team: Professor Gary Frost, Professor Jane Murphy, Dr Liz Weekes, Dr Anna Julian, Dr Abigail Tronco Hernandez.

References: 1. Pavlia A, Theodoridou M, Maltezos H C. (2021). Post-COVID Syndrome: Incidence, Clinical Spectrum, and Challenges for Primary Healthcare Professionals. Arch Med Res.; 52(6): 575-581. 2. Butler M J & Barrientos RM (2020). The impact of nutrition on COVID-19 susceptibility and long-term consequences. Brain Behav Immun. 87, 53-54. 3. Davis H E, et al. (2021). Characterizing Long COVID in an International Cohort: 7 Months of Symptoms and Their Impact. MedRxiv, 2020.12.24.20248802. 4. Zabetakis I, et al. (2020). COVID-19: The Inflammation Link and the Role of Nutrition in Potential Mitigation. Nutrients. 12(5), 1466.

