

## What we know & Why it matters

### Why is PCC relevant?

# One in Nine



Canadian adults has experienced **long-term COVID-19 symptoms**

- “1 in 9” corresponds to **3.5 million Canadians** having experienced long-term COVID-19 symptoms [1].
- Out of those experiencing long-term COVID-19 symptoms, almost **80%** did so for **6 months or more** according to a questionnaire based on 2.1 million Canadians. About half reported no improvement in their symptoms over time. [1]
- Among adults, **women** [2] and people who experienced a more **severe COVID-19 infection** (i.e., hospitalized, admitted to ICU) [3] are at **higher risk** of developing PCC.\*

\*Canada-specific data on sub-populations such as racialized groups is limited, making it difficult to analyze diversity and group-specific impacts [4].

### What is PCC?

Post COVID-19 condition (PCC) usually appears within three months from the acute COVID-19 infection and **lasts at least two months**. Symptoms vary, and can change or worsen over time, and significantly impact daily life. [6] It is also known as long COVID, and can affect **adults** and **children** [7].

**Common symptoms** may include [5, 7]:

Shortness of  
Breath



Difficulty  
Sleeping



Fatigue



Memory  
Challenges



Pain



Brain Fog



### Viewpoints

*“I’d like to see specific guidance as well as a clear statement that long COVID is truly an impactful medical condition.”*



Troy Winters,  
National Coordinator,  
Health and Safety CUPE

# PCC – Impact on communities

Living with a long-term illness that affects day-to-day activities has **spillover effects** on the **family**, workforce, and labour market [4]. Therefore communities with high-risk populations might be affected disproportionately by PCC.



**50%**

of adults dealing with PCC reported **noticeable limitations in daily activities** – with more than 20% being often or always limited [5].

# PCC – Impact on work & school [1]

- 100,000 Canadian adults have been unable to return to work or school because of their symptoms (as of June 2023).
- Among employed Canadian adults who reported ever experiencing long-term symptoms, 5.3% applied for **disability benefits** or **workers' compensation** and 93.8% of those received benefits or compensation.
- More than **1 in 5 Canadians** with long-term symptoms **missed days of work or school** for a cumulative total of about 14.5 million missed days so far.

## Specific areas of labour affected by PCC

Among working Canadians reporting long-term symptoms, the industries in which they were most commonly employed were:



Healthcare and social assistance (17.5%)



Professional, scientific and technical services (17.1%)



Educational services (10.3%)

## Viewpoints



*"It would be helpful if policies around employment (like occupational rehabilitation schemes) ... would **recognize the veracity** of symptoms and claims."*

Gill Deacon,  
CBC radio host and former PCC patient

*"The staffing shortages we are seeing in **education** are much like the shortages being reported amongst **health care** staff. We need to create workplaces that support all employees to contribute to the greatest extent."*

Kathleen Lane,  
Executive Director  
EdCan Network, Well at work

*"There is a teacher **retention and recruitment crisis**, which is linked to working conditions. [...] Allowing for **flexibility** and **part-time work**, for example, would help teachers return to their classrooms and this could have a positive impact."*

Heidi Yetman  
President CTF/FCE

# PCC – Economic Impact

## DIRECT costs

Economic burden of PCC to the **Canadian healthcare system** (estimation):

Between **CAD 7.8 billion** (conservative estimate: one PCC symptom/low prevalence) and **CAD 50.6 billion** (high estimate: overlapping symptoms/high prevalence) [8]

## INDIRECT costs

**Productivity loss:** 11% average reduction in earnings during first six months of illness and **8.3 % average annual reduction in salary** [9]

**Decrease of quality adjusted life years (QALY)** [9], as a function in health economic evaluations [10]



It is estimated that “the cumulative **global** incidence of long COVID is around 400 million individuals, which is estimated to have an **annual economic impact** of approximately **\$1 trillion USD** – equivalent to about 1% of the global economy” [11].

Preventing COVID-19 infections/PCC (e.g., through vaccination) can **reduce direct and indirect costs** with averted infections and associated consequences [9].



## References

- 1 Kuang S, Earl S, Clarke J, et al. Experiences of Canadians with long-term symptoms following COVID-19. Statistics Canada [Internet]. 2023 [cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2023001/article/00015-eng.htm>
- 2 Iba A, Hosozawa M, Hori M, et al. Prevalence of and Risk Factors for Post-COVID-19 Condition during Omicron BA.5-Dominant Wave, Japan. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2024;30(7):1380-1389. doi:10.3201/eid3007.231723
- 3 Collins E, Galipeau Y, Arnold C, et al. Clinical and serological predictors of post COVID-19 condition-findings from a Canadian prospective cohort study. *Front Public Health*. 2024;12:1276391. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1276391>
- 4 Chief Science Advisor of Canada. Dealing with the fallout: Post-COVID Condition and its continued impact on individuals and society.[Internet]. Canada: 2024 [cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/office-chief-science-advisor/initiatives-covid-19/dealing-fallout-post-covid-condition-and-its-continued-impact-individuals-and-society#1>
- 5 Canada Health science, research and data. COVID-19: Longer-term symptoms among Canadian adults: Fourth report: Summer 2024. [Internet]. Canada: 2024 [cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/post-covid-condition/summer-2024-report.html>
- 6 World Health Organization. Post Covid-19 Conditions [Internet]. 2021-10-06, [updated 2023-02-16; cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://www.who.int/teams/health-care-readiness/post-covid-19-condition>
- 7 Public Health Agency of Canada. Post-COVID-19 condition (long COVID) [Internet]. Canada: 2024 [cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms/post-covid-19-condition.html#al>
- 8 Rafferty E, Unsal A, Kirwin E. Healthcare costs and effects of post-COVID-19 condition in Canada. *Can Commun Dis Rep*. 2023;49(10):425-32. <https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v49i10a03>
- 9 Tuite AR, Ng V, Ximenes R, et al. Quantifying the economic gains associated with COVID-19 vaccination in the Canadian population: A cost-benefit analysis. *Can Commun Dis Rep*. 2023;49(6):263-73. <https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v49i06a03>
- 10 Canada Health. Interpretation Guide – Health Economics, Version 1.0, March 2024 [Internet]. Canada: 2024 [cited 2025-03-19]. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/methods-process/interpretation-guide-health-economics.html>
- 11 Al-Aly Z, Davis H, McCorkell L, et al. Long COVID science, research and policy. *Nat Med*. 2024;30(8):2148-2164. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-024-03173-6>

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for CAN-PCC resources for policymakers.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access the CAN-PCC Recommendation Map (RecMap).



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access the Post COVID-19 Condition (long COVID) page at Canada.ca.

