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# My Health My Voice

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## The long-term impact of COVID

COVID-19 can be a deadly disease, with older people and people who have other health conditions especially at risk. But what many people may not know is that people who get COVID-19, even if it's only a mild case, can suffer symptoms for months afterwards.

Whilst most people who contract COVID-19 recover within a few weeks, some continue to experience symptoms, and have complex health needs sometimes for longer than 3 months. This is called "long COVID".

Local GP/doctor Dr Jeannie Knapp says for many people, even those who only have mild symptoms initially, COVID-19 can have serious long term health impacts. Dr Knapp said that's why getting vaccinated as soon as you are eligible is so important.

Dr Knapp said as many as 30 percent of people who get COVID will end up with long COVID, which can cause crippling fatigue and other symptoms. "And that's regardless of your age,"

*Dr Knapp said. "Often with younger people getting COVID, they are less likely to die but 30 percent of them will end up getting long COVID."*

*"I can think of one patient who's only just back to full time work now, nearly 12 months after she was infected."*

**You can watch Dr Jeannie Knapp on [youtube.com/watch?v=K-VzN-8bikxQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-VzN-8bikxQ)**

**There have been more than 12,000 COVID-19 cases in the North Western Melbourne area since the pandemic began - this is almost half of all the cases in Australia (42%).**

### What is NWMPHN doing?

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (PHN) consulted with people, aged 43-59 years, diagnosed with long-COVID during April and May 2021. The purpose of this consultation was to understand their experience of living with long-COVID, including their experience of accessing care and what ongoing support they require.

NWMPHN is supporting GPs and other health providers with online tools and education, so that GPs can better support and treat people experiencing common post-COVID symptoms.

For some, COVID symptoms can last for many months.



## Have your say and a chance to win \$100

Go into the draw to win one of three \$100 vouchers when you complete our [2021 Community Health Needs Survey](#).

Your responses will be used to help us to understand what health services are needed. This enables us to plan and fund changes that make the local health system better for everyone.

Visit our [2021 Community Health Needs Survey website](#) page to learn more.



## "Say goodbye to COVID" new videos in 20 languages

At the time of writing this article Victoria is in its fifth lockdown. No doubt you, like many Victorians would like this to be the last lockdown. The key to moving back to normal is a vaccinated population. The more people who are vaccinated the better we are able to fight off the COVID virus and reduce its spread.

This month NWMPHN have released 20 videos, in 19 languages and English to help promote the benefit of vaccinating against COVID. The videos feature people from our local community.

**Please watch and share these videos to help "Say goodbye to COVID"**  
[nwmpnhn.org.au/goodbyeecovid](http://nwmpnhn.org.au/goodbyeecovid)

## Stepped Care Wellness and Mind Care for Older Adults

The pandemic has been hard for older people, and with it comes increased loneliness and life stress.

Merri Health's Stepped Care Wellness and Mind Care for Older Adults program supports people aged 65+ (50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who are stressed, sad, feeling isolated, or going through a hard time.

The program can help connect you to community activities, groups and programs to enhance mood, sleep, relaxation, social engagement, coping with anxiety, grief or loss.

The program is available for people living in Hume, Moreland, Darebin, Yarra, Gisborne, Melton, Brimbank, Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham, Moonee Valley, or Bacchus Marsh. You can be seen in your home, in the community, via phone or video call. The program is free and confidential, and interpreters are available in your preferred language.

**For more information please call 1300 637 744**



## Prescribing for ALL the things you need to stay well

Social Prescribing helps people stay connected to their community and get more out of life. A social prescription is created with support from your GP (or healthcare worker) and a wellbeing coordinator to improve your health and wellbeing in non-medical ways. It can connect you with local community or exercise groups, link you into services like parenting support, legal or money advice.

Social Prescribing is a program run by IPC Health. The IPC Health Brimbank (Deer Park) program is now open. This service

is also offered by Wyndham Vale GP clinic. Adults living, working or studying in Brimbank or Wyndham can apply for this service. Get in touch if you have social, physical or mental health needs that are making daily life hard and are willing to connect with and maintain social connections.

**For more information visit**  
[ipchealth.com.au/social-prescribing](http://ipchealth.com.au/social-prescribing)  
**Call Brimbank clinic: 9219 7103 or**  
**Wyndham clinic: 9216 7777 Email:**  
[socialprescribing@ipchealth.com.au](mailto:socialprescribing@ipchealth.com.au)

## Healthy Shakshuka (pan baked eggs) Recipe

### Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 200 g mushroom, sliced
- 1 medium red capsicum, diced
- 440 g can salt-reduced baked beans
- 800 g can no-added-salt tomatoes
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 125 g baby spinach leaves, chopped
- 1/2 punnet cherry tomatoes, halved
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup fresh Italian parsley, finely chopped, to serve

### Method

Spray a large frypan with oil and place on medium to high heat. Add onion and cook for 3 minutes until softened. Add garlic, mushrooms and capsicum. Cook for 5 minutes.

Mix through baked beans, canned tomatoes, cumin, paprika and pepper to taste. Increase heat and to bring to the boil then simmer for 5 minutes until slightly thickened.

Add spinach leaves and gently mix until they start to wilt. Sprinkle over cherry tomatoes.

Using a spoon, create 6 little wells, then crack each egg into a well. Cover pan with lid and cook until whites are firm and yolks are just set, about 5 minutes.

Remove from heat, top with parsley and serve immediately.

*Recipe sourced from [livelighter.com.au](http://livelighter.com.au)*



My Health My Voice is a newsletter of North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network, a non-profit organisation working to improve health care in our local communities. To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter please email [myvoice@nwmpnhn.org.au](mailto:myvoice@nwmpnhn.org.au) or call (03) 9347 1188.

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