COVID-19: The lo

Symptoms reign control over body after recovery

Carrie Sandler
News Editor

Having been the number one topic of conversation for more than a year, COVID-19 has drawn the focus of the globe in regards to its dreaded effects upon contraction of the disease. While the majority of people have been able to recover from COVID-19, some people are still experiencing the long-term effects this disease can have. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), most of these long-term effects deal with joint and chest pain, along with possible respiratory and cardiovascular problems. In addition to these effects, others such as fatigue and memory loss have also been reported. Science teacher Mark Matusiak said that he knows people who have gotten COVID-19 and have experienced a number of these effects.

"I do know someone who had it back in December, and still gets tired around 1-2 in the afternoon, where they can feel the fatigue," Matusiak said. "[Another person I know is] a friend of my sister who was a very athletic person and did marathons all the time got COVID-19 and she is still to the point where she can't read a book to her kids; she tells the story and at the end forgets she told the first half of it."

The mystery of COVID-19 continues to affect people in the way that there is no definite way of how one person could be affected by it. One person could experience the disease as a mild cold, whereas another could experience it with severe complications. Matusiak said he is still in shock of how someone could go from being perfectly healthy to being completely torn down just from one week of having COVID-19.

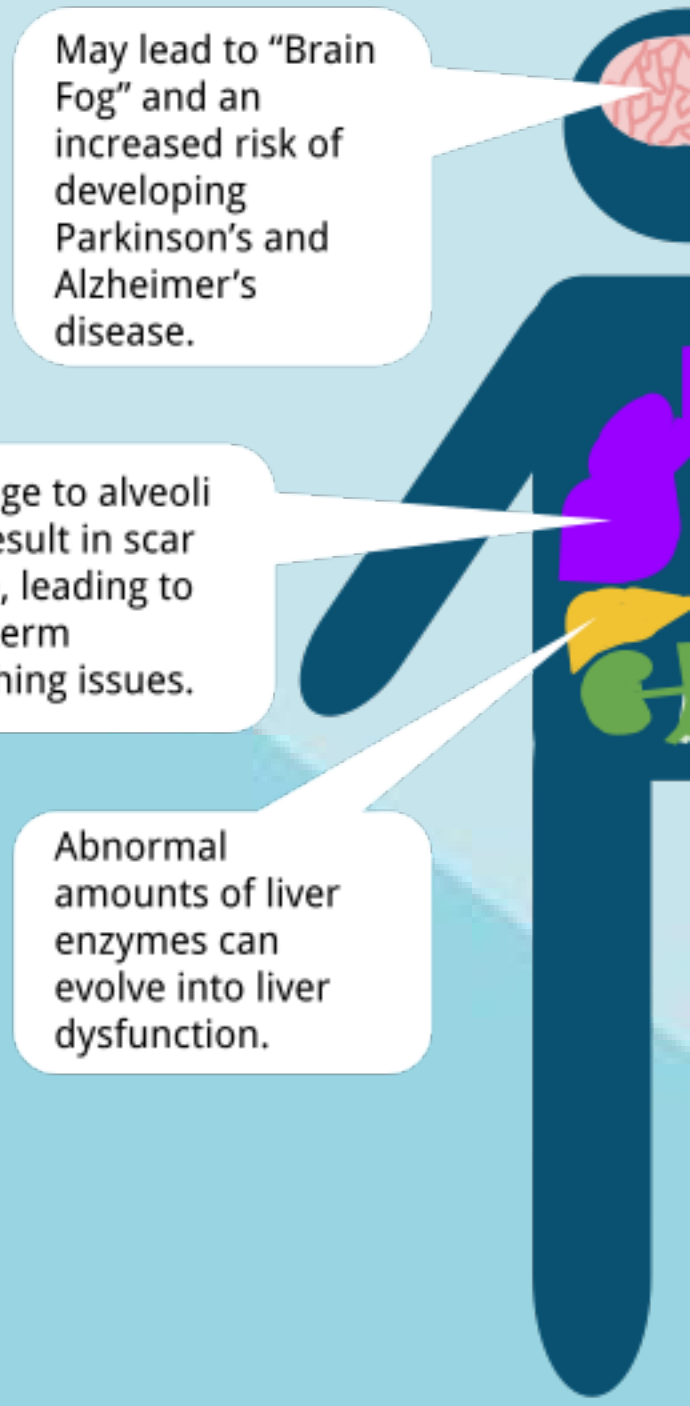
"It's crazy to me how someone can go from being athletic to losing [that energy] completely," Matusiak said.

While these long-term effects are being reported among adults, effects on youth and adolescents have not been a part of the conversation due to the fact that they are generally at a lower risk for COVID-19 compared to other adult populations. However, there have been studies reported in which children have been suffering from symptoms of COVID-19 months after having the disease. According to the National Library of Medicine (NIH), five children were observed in Sweden in which they were all studied to determine if long-term effects could be determined in youth early on. After conducting the study, the experiment found that the five youth all experienced long-term symptoms six to eight months after contraction. While these long-term symptoms are found to be prominent in some of the youth population, science teacher Sarah Moonier said she believes the elderly populations will be the ones experiencing the most long-term health effects rather than youth.

"Long term effects have a lot to deal with pre-existing conditions, so they're going to be a lot more prominent with the elderly population [compared to the youth population]," Moonier said.

With a large amount of conversation centered around the physical effects of COVID-19, mental and emotional effects that the disease has are not gaining as much attention. However, Moonier said that while the physical health effects are prolonged, emotional effects will be more prominent in the youth population.

"I honestly think the long term issues with kids will be mentality because they have had to change a lot of how they do things, so I think there'll be a section of population that will have trauma from the pandemic and people that will have depression, which will be those who do not do well with social isolation, so I think that'll be the long-term effect [for youth]," Moonier said.



What We Know

- COVID-19 is a contagious disease that has varying effects, some being potentially fatal.
- Vaccines are developed in order to stop the spread of disease
- Unfortunately for some people, effects of COVID-19 have become prolonged.
- Long term effects currently known include loss of taste and smell, memory and concentration issues, and hair loss.
- Symptoms may include fatigue, fever, chills, muscle and headaches, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, and shortness of breath.
- Some people with pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes, have been known to have blood clotting occur in their legs due to the effects from COVID-19.

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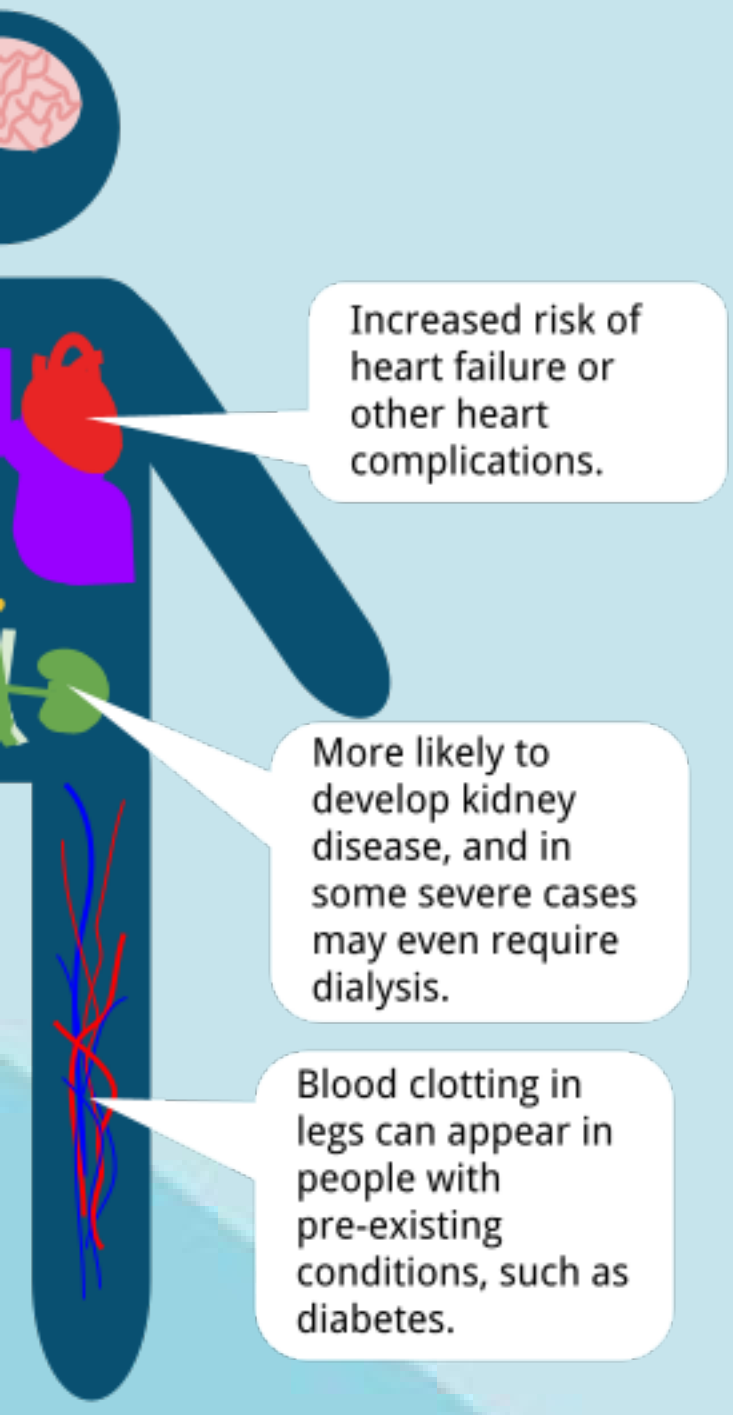

What We Don't Know

- The end of the pandemic is highly unpredictable, due to the fact that it'll take years to have most of the world's population vaccinated- and even vaccines don't offer full protection.
- It is also impossible to tell how COVID-19 will affect people years from now. COVID-19 has had different effects on people based upon factors such as pre-existing conditions and the quality of immune systems.
- How large of an effect COVID-19 will have in the future compared to the effects that other illnesses such as the flu, measles, or any other diseases with vaccinations.
- How COVID-19 effects life expectancy for younger generations.

Athletes affected by prolonged Covid effects

Taylor Spencer
Sports Editor

As the spring season begins, athletes who have contracted COVID-19 within the past six months are completing the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) Return-to-Play Procedures to ensure they are ready for participation.

The purpose of these procedures is to phase athletes back into their activities and their spring sports, as the season starts March 1. The plan is composed of five stages with the fifth stage being a return to the normal activity level and takes a minimum of one week to complete. Trainer Tony Mosello said the plan can be enacted once returning athletes receive a cardiac screening and are cleared by a physician.

"The protocol is mandated by MSHSAA, it is designed to incrementally increase the level of activity to return athletes to their sport; similar to the MSHSAA Concussion Return-to-Play protocol," Mosello said. "The first part of the form requires a doctor's exam to rule out any known COVID-19 post-infection effects on the lungs and heart. Once a physician has confirmed a negative cardiac screening, the athlete is allowed to begin the RTP with their athletic trainer."

Senior Caroline Jundt said the five-stage protocol was easy to follow, and she was ready to return within a short time period.

"The return to play protocol was really straightforward and took about a week to complete. The protocol consisted of five stages. Each stage progressively became more intense, and my heart rate was being monitored the whole time to ensure I wasn't exceeding the maximum heart rate for each stage," Jundt said. "After I completed a 60-minute practice with no issues I was able to return to play."

The first stage is a minimum of two days and consists of light activity for 15 minutes or less without exerting more than 70 percent maximum heart rate. The stage also forbids resistance training. The second stage adds simple movement activities for 30 minutes or less without exerting more than 80 percent of the maximum heart rate and is a minimum of one day. The third stage is 45 minutes or less of more complex training without exceeding 80 percent of the maximum heart rate and is a minimum of one day. The fourth stage is a minimum of two days and is normal activity for an hour or less without exceeding 80 percent of the maximum heart rate. The fifth stage is a return to full activity. The stages have to be completed without chest pain or tightness, lightheadedness, palpitations, and pre-syncope or syncope occurring. Mosello said the purpose of the form is to reconstruct the athlete's physicality and stamina so they are safe to return to the physicality level they were performing at prior to the diagnosis.

"COVID-19 essentially brings the athlete back down to pre-season level. Their conditioning and stamina have to be completely rebuilt and they also feel the need and pressure to immediately return to their previous level. When it comes to COVID-19 and athletes, the heart has absolutely shown to be more affected, which is why the MSHSAA Return-to-Play protocol was designed and why I find it to be an incredibly valuable tool," Mosello said.

Jundt said while the procedures may have caused her to miss extra days, she understands their importance in making sure she is as healthy and as ready as possible.

"Making sure an athlete is healthy before returning to practices/games after having COVID-19 is just as important as ensuring an athlete is ready to play after any other injury," Jundt said. "On top of already missing two weeks of practices and games, I had to miss a few extra days to complete the protocol. But I was still able to watch the practices I had to sit out of and I didn't miss any games, so it wasn't really disruptive."

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