



## Unusual COVID-19 Symptoms and the Impact of Evolving Viral Variants

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### Description

The COVID-19 pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has presented a myriad of clinical challenges for healthcare providers worldwide. While the typical symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and respiratory distress, it has become increasingly evident that the virus can manifest in a wide range of atypical and unusual ways, often associated with newly emerging variants. This article explores the less common clinical presentations of COVID-19, with a focus on the impact of new variants on disease manifestations.

#### Unusual clinical presentations

**Gastrointestinal symptoms:** While respiratory symptoms dominate the clinical landscape, gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, nausea, and abdominal pain have been reported, sometimes preceding respiratory symptoms or occurring in isolation.

**Neurological symptoms:** COVID-19 can affect the nervous system, leading to a variety of neurological manifestations, including anosmia (loss of smell), ageusia (loss of taste), encephalopathy, seizures, and strokes. These neurological symptoms may be seen more frequently with certain variants.

**Dermatological manifestations:** Skin rashes, hives, and other dermatological conditions have been observed in COVID-19 patients, occasionally preceding respiratory symptoms.

**Cardiovascular complications:** New variants have been associated with an increased risk of myocarditis and other cardiovascular complications in younger individuals.

**Ocular symptoms:** Conjunctivitis and other eye-related symptoms have been reported, emphasizing the multi-organ involvement seen in COVID-19.

**Pediatric inflammatory syndromes:** Some children with COVID-19 develop a condition known as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), characterized by fever, rash, abdominal pain, and cardiovascular symptoms, which may be associated with specific variants.

**Long COVID:** Prolonged and persistent symptoms, often referred to as "long COVID," can include fatigue, cognitive impairment, and other symptoms that linger for weeks or months after the acute infection.

#### Impact of new variants

The emergence of novel variants of SARS-CoV-2 has raised concerns regarding their potential to alter the clinical course of COVID-19. Some of these variants have exhibited increased transmissibility, modified disease severity, and potential resistance to immunity conferred through vaccination or previous infection. In certain cases, these variants have been associated with unique clinical manifestations or atypical presentations, thereby adding complexity to our comprehension of the disease.

**Transmissibility:** Some variants, such as the Delta variant, have demonstrated heightened transmissibility, resulting in more rapid and widespread community transmission. This increased transmissibility has led to surges in cases and greater strain on healthcare systems.

**Disease severity:** While not all variants are associated with increased disease severity, certain ones have shown an augmented risk of severe illness and hospitalization. For example, the Alpha variant raised concerns about greater disease severity, particularly in unvaccinated populations.

**Vaccine evasion:** The ability of certain variants to partially evade immunity from prior infection or vaccination has garnered significant attention. Variants like Beta and Gamma have been associated with reduced vaccine efficacy, prompting the need for booster doses and ongoing vaccine development efforts.

**Clinical manifestations:** Specific variants may be linked to unique clinical manifestations or atypical presentations of COVID-19. For instance, the emergence of the Delta variant coincided with reports of more gastrointestinal symptoms and neurological complications.

#### Conclusion

As our knowledge of COVID-19 continues to evolve, it is crucial for healthcare providers to remain vigilant about the diverse and atypical ways in which the virus can manifest, especially in the context of emerging variants. Understanding the full spectrum of clinical presentations is essential for timely diagnosis, appropriate management, and effective public health strategies. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between specific variants and unusual clinical presentations, allowing for more targeted interventions and improved patient outcomes.

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