

What's the Problem?

Patients post COVID-19 infection have functional limitations at home related to the multi-system effects of the infection, in addition to elevated risk for post-intensive care syndrome.

Our goals were to ensure patients had the resources they needed to safely mobilize at home, ensure referral to appropriate agencies for home care and therapies, and provide guidance on return to life activities in the setting of the stay-at-home order, need to self-quarantine, and limited outpatient therapy options.

Cause analysis

Root causes of this problem included:

- Evolving understanding functional problems faced by COVID-19 patients
- Lack of established safety data in this population
- Lack of access to new in-person outpatient PM&R and therapy visits
- Lack of telehealth capability for outpatient therapy

How Might We: Ensure appropriate outpatient follow up for the functional issues patients face post COVID-19 illness

A protocol was developed for referral to outpatient PM&R telehealth visits after discharge from COVID admission. The protocol included those discharged with home oxygen, adaptive equipment, home care services or new cognitive and/or functional changes.

An interface was also established with Jefferson Medical Group, Jefferson Northeast, and Jefferson New Jersey COVID-19 Care Coordination Teams to ensure everyone is aware of our services, and suggested to the PM&R Department at Abington that they do similar follow ups. Information regarding physical function was added to the COVID-19 discharge instructions for all patients which includes our department's contact information and exercise videos created in concert with the inpatient team. To improve access to care we have also created screening questions to be used by care coordinators and are pursuing protocols for therapy telehealth visits.

Videos for Your Physical Health after COVID-19: <https://tinyurl.com/ychq7gjs>
Created by the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University

Discharge Paperwork Addendum:

- The purpose of these videos is to show you some breathing exercises and gradual strengthening exercises for your arms and legs that can help you recover from COVID-19 and improve your quality of life.
- The *Borg scale* shown in the videos helps guide the amount of effort you should put into these exercises.
- If you feel short of breath, chest pain, dizziness or lightheadedness, STOP the exercises and contact your physician.
- If you have difficulty doing these exercises or have any questions, please make an appointment with the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Department of Rehabilitation would be happy to aide you in your recovery.
- To schedule a telehealth appointment, please call 215 955 1200

Post COVID-19 patients are being seen via PM&R telehealth visits, and we are assessing their functional deficits, and providing them with resources and counseling. To refer: place an outpatient referral to PM&R in EPIC, and it will drop in our schedulers' work queue to be seen in 3-5 days. Alternatively, have the patient call (215) 955-1200 to schedule.

Outpatient exercise videos can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDiPoZEW1pw&list=PLq-eEddi_wgHu7EWurmOY3QFEUHchnX_G