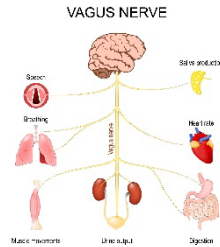


Rocky Vista University (RVU) Vagal Approaches Study Newsletter

WE ARE GRATEFUL YOU ARE HERE! YOU ARE CENTRAL TO THIS TRIAL AND WE WANT YOU TO BE INFORMED OF OUR PROGRESS. YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH LONG COVID.



What is the Vagus Nerve?

The vagus nerve is a nerve in your body that starts in your brain and travels down through your neck into your chest and belly — touching your heart, lungs, stomach, intestines, and more. It helps your brain monitor and control all kinds of automatic things — like breathing, digestion, and heart rate — without you needing to think about it. Your nervous system has two main settings:

1. Fight or Flight: This helps you react to danger (increases your heart rate and speeding up your breathing).
2. Rest and Digest: This is your calm and recovery mode (slows your heart rate, supports digestion, and helps your body repair and recharge).

The vagus nerve is the main controller of “rest and digest.”

If you have questions or would like to suggest a topic for the newsletter, reach out to our team at longcovidwellness@leidos.com.

What happens when the vagus nerve isn't working well?

If your vagus nerve isn't doing its job properly, your body can get stuck in “stress mode”. That can lead to:

- Racing heart
- Feeling anxious
- Trouble sleeping
- Weakened immune system or more inflammation

You may feel like your nervous system is stuck in overdrive — especially after viral illnesses like COVID-19.

Why does this matter in a post-COVID world?

You might have symptoms like fatigue, or anxiety — and doctors think the vagus nerve may play a role¹.

- COVID might inflame or damage the vagus nerve.
- This may explain why some people feel exhausted, anxious, and out of balance long after the infection is gone.
- Supporting the vagus nerve may assist with healing or symptom relief.

¹<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37452829/>