


Take comfort from the support you will undoubtedly receive

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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In our #SurvivorStories series, we put a face to Covid-19 by sharing the stories of people who have fought the virus and come out the other side. Freelance financial journalist and mom, Neesa Moodley talks us through her journey.



Neesa Moodley

■ *Do you know how and when you contracted Covid-19?*

There are far too many people out there thinking that “it won’t happen to me”. I did everything I was supposed to – I wore the mask constantly, social distanced, my kids are still doing online schooling, I washed my hands and sanitised and I got it anyway. I have no idea where I got it. The only exposure I can think of would have happened when I was out getting groceries or when I went for my regular blood tests. My family was horrified because I have an artificial heart valve and asthma, so I fall in the high risk category.

■ *Describe the journey of your illness*

My symptoms initially started with feeling tired and trembling hands. I put this down to being tired as I was working long hours on a project. At the same time, my post nasal drip started along with a sore throat but I simply put it down to my allergies acting up. On the Saturday night, I started having chills. I was under four blankets, wearing double layers of clothing and still shivering. I started self-isolating on Monday morning, called my doctor and was tested on Tuesday morning. Even when I received the positive test results on Thursday, I couldn’t believe it because up to that point, it felt like a normal flu. I didn’t even have a raised temperature. I think days seven to 10 were the worst. I have heard from doctors that this is when most cases are hospitalised. That was when I had constant fever and a debilitating headache that no meds could help. Not even sleep helped. I would go to sleep with the massive headache, dream about it and wake up with it. I also had nausea and diarrhoea, night sweats, a horrible dry cough and nasal congestion during this time. A weird symptom that is not common was that for two days, my skin was extremely sensitive. It was painful to the touch. Having a shower and even just wearing clothes made me feel like screaming. I literally wanted to jump out of my skin.

■ *How are you feeling now?*

I still get tired easily and the dry nagging cough has remained although it seems to be getting better. The survivor stories in

the Facebook groups say the cough sticks around for another four or so weeks. It feels slightly unreal to think that I had it. I'm grateful no one else in my family got it and I'm slightly nervous. I have heard that you can get it again a few months later and the second bout is worse than the first.

▣ ***What have you learnt from your experience?***

Once I tested positive, I reached out for emotional support from my family and friends. I also decided to share my experience and my status to raise awareness and take away some of the irrational fears that people feel. The outpouring of support and messages on Facebook was overwhelming and it made a massive difference towards helping me to stay positive. I also got tons of advice that proved really helpful. So I guess I learnt that it's not a bad thing to reach out for help and support when you need it. From the encouraging text messages to the yummy soups that my neighbours passed over the wall, I was surrounded with love even though I was isolated in one room.

▣ ***What message would you like to send to people out there?***

When you test positive, you are asked to self-isolate at home - preferably in a separate room with a separate bathroom. However, the family living at home with you is now also under quarantine as they have been exposed to you so no one is allowed to leave the house for two weeks. Even if you think you are totally safe, make arrangements now with a friend or family member not living with you so that they can drop off any groceries or medication you might need during that two-week isolation period.

Stay calm and take all the vitamins and recommended meds to treat the symptoms. I used ACC200 for nasal congestion, Deselex for the post-nasal drip, Prospan cough syrup, Panado for fever and pain, Immodium for diarrhoea, Valoid for nausea, Demazin or Sinutab and Vicks. I also drank a lot of water because your throat is constantly dry – I went through 25 litres of water in nine days. Stay hydrated and drink hot drinks at least four times a day. Vitamin D3 made a huge difference once I started taking it and I tried to sit in a sunny spot in my room for at least half an hour a day. Most important, rest as much as possible. Sleep on your stomach or sides so your lungs are not under pressure and if you can get a pulse oximeter, use it to measure your heart rate and oxygen levels.

Lastly, please be kind to those who have Covid and don't treat them like pariahs after they have recovered. Please share your status and your experience to raise awareness, remove the stigma; and take comfort from the support you will undoubtedly receive.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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