



Healing from Covid without Medication

My husband, my son and I (aged 64, 25 and 60) all tested positive for Covid on 14th April 21.

At the time all three of us had a slight fever, body ache and tiredness. Actually, I had some loose motions on the 9th evening, which got better the next day, then I developed a slight fever, which continued. Until this point, I did not suspect Covid. On the 13th when my son and husband both complained of body ache and feeling feverish, we went for an RT-PCR test. The results came in next morning, all three of us tested positive.

I spoke to Dr Nandita Shah soon after, for advice on how we should manage the disease in home isolation, what we should eat, what we should watch out for etc. What follows is what we experienced and the advice we received from her, which we adhered to closely, and which helped us come out of the illness slowly, without panic and without medicines.

Fever

It will be best not to take any medicines. Do not be afraid of fever - it is a sign that the body is fighting the virus and to do so it needs to raise its temperature. If we start taking paracetamol - it will suppress the fever, but will also interfere with the body's own process of fighting the disease. Let the fever run its course. In case it is too high, and the patient is comfortable with it, put a wet cloth on the forehead.

That same night my fever went up to 103.4 °F. Over the next 3 days it would range between 100.7 and 103 once going to 103.8, rising in the evenings, usually accompanied by a slight headache.

(During this time, I found a wet towel on my forehead to be very comforting.) Then for 2 days the fever stayed between 99.8 and 100.8. Finally on the 20th morning it was normal.

My son fortunately had only a back ache and slight fever for 2 days and was well after that.

My husband continued to have a fever, between 99.6 and 100.5 all the days that I had fever, and he was looking after me. On the 21st, the day after my fever was normal, his fever started rising, and would be between 100.4 and 102.6 until the 27th. Then from 28th to the 30th it stayed between 99.2 and 99.8. On 1st May it was normal.

The days when the fever was higher were quite difficult. We were able to message Dr Shah each day and she encouraged us to be patient, and assured us that the fever will come down. Connecting with her once or twice each day was very reassuring, and helped us stay on course.

SPO₂ Level

We had an Oximeter and were checking oxygen levels regularly. Throughout the days when I had fever, O₂ levels varied from 92 to 95. The day before the fever came to normal it went down to 88. For the next 3 days it stayed between 87 and 90. Finally on the fourth day it was 95, and slowly over the next week climbed up to 97. Similarly, my husband's O₂ levels were between 90 and 95

during the days his fever was high, dropping to 89 just before his fever came to normal. Slowly climbed up to 96 over the next few days.

Since all other indicators were improving, and we felt no breathlessness, or discomfort while breathing, Dr Shah suggested we wait - most likely the oxygen levels would be better in a few days. We continued monitoring the oxygen levels.

Food

Take warm fluids throughout the day. Eat only when you feel like eating, and have whatever the body wants to have.

We had green smoothies at room temperature and a lot of herbal tea throughout the day. In the early days we also had nimbu panis. We had some musk melon as well, when we felt like it. As the fever began to drop, the appetite returned and we started having light food like idlis and khichdi.

We made a paste of crushed ginger, garlic, turmeric and salt. Warm these together, and eat after cooling. Suggested by a friend who had Covid earlier, we found this helpful for the cough.

Cough

We both developed a deep cough in the chest, with mucus, which would stick and not come out creating considerable discomfort. The cough developed as the fever was decreasing, and would cause maximum irritation on lying down especially at night. One would then have to sit up and cough a lot to dislodge the mucus in the throat or air passage. This cough continued for a few days even after the fever had gone. Slowly the mucus loosened up, we could bring it out and then the intensity of the cough diminished over a few days.

Dr Shah advised taking a teaspoon of haldi (turmeric powder) in a cup of hot water. We took this 2-3 times a day till the cough decreased.

Breathing Exercises

We kept up simple deep breathing exercises throughout the illness. Also Pranayam: Bhramari, Ujjayi, Anulom Vilom. We also did 2 types of proning:

- Breathing while lying on the stomach with pillows below the chest and ankle for as long as possible (<https://youtu.be/H9kEddelYDE>).

- Proning (kneeling with head down) with deep breath in and coughing while exhaling (<https://youtu.be/z2VaS-exhlg>). When energy levels were low, we did the simple lying on the stomach exercise. When we could, we would do the second one, if possible two or three times a day. We found all breathing exercises to be beneficial. Proning exercises made a marked difference to breaking the cough. These were all also instrumental in helping to improve O₂ levels when they had dipped. Another thing that helped ease breathing was an inhaler made with slightly roasted ajwain, cloves, bhimseni camphor and a few drops of eucalyptus oil, all tied up in a little cloth ball.

Rest

Dr Shah emphasized that rest is extremely important through the illness and later. Viral infections make the body very weak and it needs a lot of rest to regain its health.

We did find that we felt very weak. This persisted even after the fever was gone and the cough had subsided, and the oxygen level had improved. We ended the quarantine exactly 3 weeks after we had tested positive. However, for 2 weeks after that we continued a very relaxed routine, sleeping during the day, going to bed early and so on. It takes a long time for energy levels to return to normal.

A few other observations

We kept a daily record of temperature and oxygen level (morning and evening). This was very helpful to share with Dr Shah and also for us to see the pattern of how things were changing. It has also

helped me write this account of our Covid experience.

While the fever lasted and to an extent even later, we found our throats to be severely parched. So much so that some nights one woke up and felt the tongue was stuck to the palette, and one had to drink lots of water. Lips were also terribly cracked and peeling.

While passing urine there was a weak urine stream, though no other discomfort. This improved gradually after the fever had subsided.

We had both become very sensitive to light and noise. So we tended to draw the curtains and keep the room dark particularly in the afternoon. We also could not watch news or TV and preferred listening to gentle music.

During this time it was difficult to speak much in particular on the phone, as it would lead to a bout of coughing. Messaging worked better.

Emotionally one felt very sensitive and vulnerable. We were grateful to be undergoing this together.

Dr Nandita Shah's reassurances right throughout gave us confidence and kept us out of hospitals, and kept us safe. It would have been very difficult otherwise, especially when the oxygen levels were dropping. Through this process we learnt to respect and rely on the body's own mechanisms of healing.

- Rashmi Korjan

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