

Ten lessons I learned after surviving COVID-19

by Mark Pere Madrona

About seven months ago, I was diagnosed with COVID-19 together with my entire family. Thankfully, we only had a mild case with symptoms like itchy throat and coughing. Our family was allowed to stay at home during the quarantine period.

Let me share with you ten lessons that I learned during that ordeal.

1. Do not entertain visitors to your house!

Us Filipinos are known for our hospitality to visitors. We may be following strict health protocols within our families like wearing face masks when going out, observing social distancing, and getting vaccinated, but what about the visitors that we are entertaining?

2. When you're sick, stay at home!

We got infected through a relative who remained adamant on visiting us in Quezon City for a birthday celebration. She was coughing when she arrived, but she assured us that she's only having an asthma attack and that she is taking medications.

Shortly after returning to the province, she was rushed to a hospital because of difficulty breathing. The lesson here is that if you are not feeling well, stay home not just because you need rest but to protect others from you as well.

3. Get tested immediately

If you are a close contact of someone who turned out to be COVID positive or if you are already experiencing symptoms, you must get tested as soon as possible. It is important to get the right diagnosis so that you can get treated before it is too late. Thankfully, RT-PCR swab tests are no longer as pricey as before.

4. Strategize your actions

Once you test positive for COVID-19, it is very important to plan your next steps carefully. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by panic.

If you are living in a large household and you are the only one who tested positive, you may have to leave your house and stay in an isolation facility depending on the protocols set by your local government. The steps won't be as easy if several people test positive in your household – more so if they have special needs.

5. Contact a doctor and follow their advice

After testing positive for COVID-19, you have to be in touch with a doctor immediately. If your local government requires you to be in a quarantine facility, then a government physician will be the one supervising you toward recovery for free.

If staying under home quarantine is allowed in your area and you are only experiencing mild symptoms, then you can try to get in touch with doctors that offer telemedicine service.

6. Eat, rest, and sleep well

As your immune system fights off COVID-19, it is important for you to assist it in doing so. During the 14-day quarantine period, you need to do your best to eat fruits and vegetables as much as you can to regain your health. Your body also needs enough rest and sleep. That is why you have to be on leave from work during this time.

7. Delivery and mobile banking apps and will be your friend

As mentioned earlier, you have to stay at home as soon as you feel sick or if you have been identified as a close contact of someone who tested positive. Don't be a law-violator like certain government officials!

If you and your family will be on quarantine, online grocery and food delivery services as well as mobile banking applications will be your friend. Some drugstores even offer pick-up and delivery services now!

8. Follow the quarantine

In case you test positive for COVID-19, it is your responsibility to your family and the society to remain isolated for 14 days or maybe longer than that as long as you are still experiencing symptoms. You have to do so even if barangay officials are not monitoring. You will do this to protect others from getting infected with COVID-19 because of you.

9. Know your legal rights

It is a must for you to know your legal rights as a COVID-19 patient. For example, your diagnosis should remain private unless you choose to disclose it.

Your neighbors, officemates, as well as attending health care providers can be held legally liable if they violate Section 6.g. of Republic Act 11332 or the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act."

If you are a government employee, you are entitled to avail of a 14-day leave that covers the quarantine period.

10. Get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible

COVID-19 survivors can now be vaccinated just two weeks or fourteen days after recovery - whether it's their first or second dose. Prior to that, the DOH instructed COVID-19 survivors to wait for three months before getting the jab.

There is now a strong scientific consensus that COVID-19 survivors cannot rely on natural immunity alone to minimize the risk of reinfection. I got fully vaccinated last July.

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