



## Wellbeing during the Coronavirus pandemic

### **What does having the virus actually feel like?**

The fear which people have of catching the virus is understandable. In light of this, I thought I would set out what my experience was of the virus and how I personally coped with having it and with self-isolating. This is a personal account only and not intended to set out any medical advice. Full guidance for those self-isolating with symptoms can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> .

Here was my experience and how I dealt with the virus.

Day 1 – I had some repeated hot spells during the day which I did not put down to anything; I assumed the heating was too high! My tip – listen closely to your body and if you feel something coming on, try to rest and relax as much as you can.

Day 2 – I felt very tired at points during the day.

Day 3 – during the evening I began to feel short of breath. My chest was tight and it felt more difficult to take in air. This seems to be a common symptom of the virus. Although it was initially alarming, I found a number of ways to combat it:

- Drinking lots of water seemed to help (and is recommended by the gov.uk guidance). I kept a 1.5 litre bottle by my bed to avoid having to go back to refill all the time.
- When lying down, I found that lying on my back was better; it was not easy to take in air on my side. Nevertheless, be prepared that if you have these symptoms at night (as I did), you may find it difficult to sleep.
- Paradoxically, given I was ill, sitting up seemed better than lying down to allow for easier breathing.
- Although I had no mucus at all, my nose felt constricted. I used a saline nasal spray from time to time, which relieved this.
- I kept the window in the room I was sleeping in slightly open – with the fresh air circulating, it felt easier to breathe. I also slept at the other end of the bed so as to be near to the window.
- In order to relax mentally, I listened to some guided meditations (see exercise article).

Day 3 – on this day I again had shortness of breath and some chest tightness. I was also generally extremely fatigued. I was lucky in that my fiancée was able to cook meals whilst I was ill, but others may either be self-isolating alone, or have partners who are also sick. I would recommend:

- Having ready meals available in the freezer which you can easily heat up without expending much energy;
- Using services such as the Deliveroo ‘no contact’ drop off service, where a meal is left outside your door.

On this day, I found that I lost some of my sense of taste. However, it quickly came back the next day.

Day 4 – I felt a lot of fatigue, and light-headedness at various points. My chest area was also sore. I continued to drink lots of water. I found that staying in bed as much as possible helped.



Day 5 – fatigue and chest pain. In common with other days, I found that I felt better at some times and then suddenly much worse at others. I had more light-headedness during this day and subsequent days.

Days 6-9 – fatigue.

Day 10 – this was the first day when I felt fully better but still tired easily. Prepare for the long haul if you do get the virus, and don't go back to doing too much too soon.

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