

# **An encounter with a virus**

# Our journey in a phrase: “what matters is just getting up and moving one step at a time”




# Seven things to remember

PREPARE	1	Always be vigilant
	2	Set up the infrastructure
COPE	3	Ask for help
	4	No place like home
	5	Stay positive
RECOVER	6	Be grateful
	7	Change

# 1. Always be vigilant

- Don't underestimate the virus – it can spread anyhow, anywhere.
- Don't overestimate your immunity – no one is immune.
- The virus affects different people differently – not showing symptoms doesn't mean you are ok, they can surface very suddenly ... so if you sense even a bit of fever or cough / cold, isolate yourselves (*which is what we did, very early on*)
- Don't assume that even your existing physical fitness will suffice if infected – the virus can quickly overcome your “favourable” conditions like age, no pre-existing conditions etc. – and leave you weakened.
- No protection and caution is too much – sanitise, wear masks, wash hands, repeat the above ...

## 2. Set up the infrastructure

A	Friends and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree, in advance, with friends and family as to protocol around quarantine, food, transport (both for oneself and for them) if the infection happens</li><li>• Plan for how kids and elders will manage should one fall sick – keeping elders away is extremely critical.</li></ul>
B	Medical provisions	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stock up on medicines – Crocin, Vit C, Zinc and supplements</li><li>• Buy essential medical equipment – pulse oximeter, steam inhaler, thermos flasks, electric kettle, thermometers etc.</li></ul></div> <div></div>
C	Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• List of places to get tested, checked up and admitted (hospitals and medical centres) and ambulance services</li><li>• Protocol and processes for testing, admission etc.</li></ul>
D	Medical advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with a doctor the moment you feel sick; follow the advice scrupulously.</li><li>• Different doctors may be needed at different times for different purposes – some for tele / video consulting, some for physical examination, some for expert advice – whatever the purpose, trust the doctor</li><li>• <i>We spoke to a doctor in the society as our first line and also to a doctor treating patients in Nanavati hospital, and finally to a doctor handling COVID cases literally actually held our hands through the recovery process. All the medical experts we reached out to provided sound advice and lots of positivity, which made recovery easier.</i></li></ul>
E	Home cures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Home remedies like Ayush Kadha, regular hot water, with or without honey, and gargling with salt water provided a lot of comfort during the recovery.</li><li>• Yoga exercises like pranayama increase lung capacity (which is what is affected by COVID) and should be done even during the illness (<i>we regularly did pranayama and it helped</i>)</li><li>• Sleeping on the side / stomach improves breathing.</li><li>• <i>Hot home cooked food is critical to helping the body build its capacity to fight the infection.</i></li></ul>

### 3. Ask for help – you cannot fight this battle alone

"What is the bravest thing  
you've ever said?" asked  
the boy.



"Help," said the horse.

"Asking for help isn't  
giving up," said the horse.



"It's refusing to give up."

- There is love all around – just ask.
- Family and friends truly value you.
- Reach out to everyone who can help.
- Remember to give help when asked.

### 3. Ask for help – being together makes recovery easier



#### Our experience:

**All whom we asked for help responded magnificently.**

- **The family** was always by our side, physically and emotionally.
- A set of **close friends** were always ready to help, unhesitatingly, anytime of the day, in every capacity possible – arranging testing and medical aid, being ready to transport us to the hospital, picking up and delivering medicines, provisions & groceries, arranging ambulances or just lending a sympathetic ear.
- **Doctors** gave us mental strength by taking our calls at odd hours and answering our concerns sympathetically
- The **BMC staff** were cheerful and gave us support when we asked for help or dispensations (like returning home from isolation)
- Everyone – **the society management committee, neighbours, office colleagues, friends and family** – put lots of efforts, even without being asked, to arrange emergency beds and transport. Everyone kept the stream of good wishes flowing to us continuously.

## 4. No place like home

- The government resources are stretched – they are doing their best but cannot put up emergency support at the isolation set ups. The isolation facilities are designed for people who don't have the luxury of home isolation (e.g. travelers, chawl dwellers)
- If one doesn't need hospitalization or oxygen, and one has the wherewithal to manage at home. It is easier to recover in a familiar environment like home.

### Our experience

*We erred in not arguing with the officials and, hence, in staying one night in an isolation facility. The facility was not designed for emergencies and hence we convinced the doctors to discharge us the next day to home isolation.*

## 5. Stay positive and focus on getting well

"We don't need to fight the storm," said the horse



"If we are still, it will pass"



"These are dark clouds," said the boy  
Yes, but they will move on," said the horse, "the blue sky above never leaves."

- Pray – it reduces stress and hastens the recovery
- Focus on recovery – it is ok to not answer calls and reply to messages, not work, not talk and just rest

### Our experience

- We prayed regularly; our friends and family also kept praying, sending across positivity to us.
- We avoided reading negative news as much as possible

## 6. Be grateful



"Is your glass half empty or half full?"  
asked the mole.  
"I think I'm grateful to have a glass,"  
said the boy

- Cherish what you have, when you come out of the illness
- Be thankful for having survived the illness, howsoever the experience may have been

### Our experience

- *Our tense moments showed us our friends and reinforced our faith in God and in the goodness of humanity (friends, family, neighbours, office colleagues, doctors, BMC staff)*

## 7. Change – review priorities



- Re-examine your priorities and rebalance them.
- Listen more to dreams than to fears.
- Stay in touch with people forever.

### Our experience

- We agreed to invest more in ourselves and in our family.
- Our kids were independent and resilient - we have decided to make them more self-reliant.
- We also decided that we should help unhesitatingly when asked for help, and not just financially but also, more importantly, by being physically and emotionally engaged.

## 7. Change – be kind; you may need it tomorrow



- It is important to be vigilant, not scared
- Being careful does not mean stigmatising and alienating the people affected by the illness

### Our experience

- *Kindness comes unasked for – people reached out and helped us with lots of positivity in addition to actual help on the ground.*

# Seven things to remember – reiterating the message

PREPARE	1	Always be vigilant: you cannot be too careful
	2	Set up the infrastructure: makes it easier if the infection comes home
COPE	3	Ask for help: this battle cannot be fought alone
	4	No place like home: easier to recover
	5	Stay positive: pray, stay focused on recovery
RECOVER	6	Be grateful: accept the journey as it happened
	7	Change: reprioritise, add kindness to life