

## My COVID-19 Story

So, it was a surprise to suddenly have chills and to feel very tired on Friday evening February 12th, 2021. The chills and tiredness went away after a good night's sleep but returned the next evening, Saturday, and this time I had a fever and was feeling lethargic and exhausted. By Sunday I had a nasty headache, was dizzy, had chills with a fever, no energy, and had a slight cough.

At the time I was a healthy, 64-year-old adult. I do not smoke but do enjoy a glass of wine each evening and am not overweight and enjoy a healthy diet. I am very active and enjoy all that life has to offer when possible. I have been ultra-careful following COVID-19 restrictions when out shopping, masking (2 masks), gloves, washing and disinfecting hands often, no visitors, staying home unless it was necessary, etc. Since I am not usually prone to catching bugs, I instantly thought COVID-19 was a possibility since I had some of the symptoms. My husband made an appointment for me to get tested at the clinic in Napanee on Monday. The test came back negative. So I went home. A few days later I was so sick I called our doctor to see about having another COVID test. By this time I could hardly walk and needed assistance, breathing was difficult, lots of coughing and chest pain. I was immediately sent to the Napanee hospital for chest X-rays. At this time they still thought I was negative.

The results came in and my doctor informed me I had COVID Pneumonia. I was not surprised. If it wasn't for the constant care of my husband I would have been in the hospital. I could not eat, drink, walk without assistance or have a straight thought. I barely knew what day it was. I had puffers four times a day along with antibiotics that I am sensitive to so was prescribed super strong antinausea pills that helped a great deal. Each cough seemed to strain muscles around my ribs. Fever, chills, headaches came and went. I also experienced muscle pain, loss of appetite, loss of sense of smell and taste, loss of memory, loss of time altogether. Food was horrible and I dreaded any meals my husband lovingly made for me. It was not a pleasant ride but luckily I was fortunate to have a doctor who called me regularly along with a specialist from KFL&A Public Health who kept an eye on my symptoms and was a calming and reassuring influence to my daily routine.

Finally I was somewhat better and my isolation period ended on February 28, 2021. But now I am a long hauler. I feel so fortunate to have survived but COVID-19 had damaged nerves in my muscles in the arms, shoulders, wrists and knees. I now have chronic tendinitis, low energy and am out of breath sometimes for no reason at all. My physical strength has all but disappeared and I get exhausted very easily from the simplest tasks. I can only do daily chores and some daily things I enjoy in small amounts or I will have what I call "pain days" where my muscles will ache with shooting pains for up to 3 days, the tendinitis will flare up for days. I now wear braces on my wrists and ice a few times a day. No one really knows how long these leftover symptoms will last so I found it best to accept it and work with my body to help it heal the best it can. I had to give up some activities that I love deeply, like horse training, riding, even grooming. I am able to still sew and am developing some skills in my new passion for fabric art so life is still good.

My husband did catch COVID-19 from me and he was so lucky to have had a mild case yet he still took the time and much of his energy and love to help me through the worst days. Please get vaccinated and wear a mask when asked. People who survive this, I am sure, often are fine, but it can affect you for a much longer period of time and change your life in a negative way, possibly forever. You do not want to get sick with COVID 19 or give it to someone you love. Thank you for reading my story that I am sure is one of many that can be told.

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