Don’t Confuse a Summer Cold With COVID-19

July 5, 2021 By Shawn Decker

(UPDATE: I probably had COVID-19. Here’s an updated blog entry.)

I recently blogged about the joy of getting out and seeing friends and family and being more social and living that sweet promise of the vax life... so, I gotta write about the flip side of that, since the tax came due a lot sooner than I anticipated.

For the last week or so, I’ve been a snotty, coughing mess. One night, I had a fever that hovered around 100 for several hours. I knew I was in for it at the first hints of malaise, because in January/February of 2020 I had a very similar bug that lasted about five weeks. At times, as the news of the pandemic intensified and the lockdown began, I wondered if I had been exposed to COVID-19.

Fast forward to now, and my how the times have changed. Last week I took a rapid COVID-19 test at home, purchased at the drug store, and found out within about fifteen minutes that I was negative. Sure, I still felt like shit, but I had the peace of mind that I didn’t have COVID-19. Of course, I’m vax’d, which means the likelihood of me getting sick after exposure is low, but I am still hoping to avoid adding that infection to my collection.

And speaking of my journey and the medical absurdity that has painted a good portion of it, wearing a mask and staying away from people gave me the longest stretch of good health I’ve ever had. Fifteen months of no coughs, colds or any of the germs that bind us. I recorded my highest t-cell count ever in the midst of this global pandemic. I’m fully aware of the tragedy and the irony...

I guess what I’m reminded of, as I grab another tissue and blow my nose, is that as someone with HIV the general public has always been way more of a danger to me than the other way around. What’s important is finding the safe balance between living my life and minimizing the risk of attaining nuisances like this pesky cold. Even after a pandemic, a lot of people will still go out when they know they are sick. The close talkers and their spittle takes are chomping at the bit to corner us at a show, having been in isolation, they’ve surely plied their trade splattering their bathroom mirrors with saliva and stories that take four times longer to tell than the subject matter calls for.

Don’t get me wrong: I’m as sensitive to the close-talkers’ needs as I am powerless to tell them to please stop closing the gap provided by my polite, subtle half-steps backwards. The pandemic has been hard on everyone in some very collective, as well as uniquely and oddly specific, ways.

Anyway, thanks for reading my bleary-headed rant. Hope this finds you well. I’m off to take a nap.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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