Tomorrow I Get The #COVID19 Vaccination

March 7, 2021 By Shawn Decker

Tomorrow I'm driving two hours to get the Johnson & Johnson vaccination for COVID-19. First and foremost, I must thank my partner, Gwenn, for doing the legwork. She's the one over the last year who has bore the burden of getting groceries, going out for household necessities and sparing me from potential exposure to this hip, new virus. As I've said a lot recently: "My viral dance card* is full."

In Virginia, I qualify for earlier access to the vaccine due to my HIV status, even though my health is pretty stable. I wrote some months back about a record high t-cell count, likely the result of not leaving the house, thus giving my immune system a reprieve from all the hard work it does alongside my effective HIV drug regimen. There has been some discussion in the HIV community about whether we should or shouldn't get the vaccine ahead of anyone else if our health is good and we aren't in a profession that exposes us to the public...

My thoughts on this can only be in regard to my personal situation. Gwenn has dealt with more of the stress of this pandemic than I have, and I know she worries about me. In the two decades since we fell in love, she's seen what can happen and how quickly my "remarkable health, all things considered" can go down the shitter. A key example is when I had a side effect to a hemophilia medication that landed me in the hospital, in the middle of a snowstorm. In twenty-four hours I went from sledding down the street, laughing with friends to being unable to speak in full sentences.

If it were up to me, would I have been going into Facebook groups like Gwenn did, to research how people are locating these mysterious vaccines? Probably not. I'm lazy. I'd probably just ask a doctor during one of my upcoming telemedicine appointments. Even after seeing people suddenly appearing on my social media timeline, thus causing me to ponder: "How did they get it?" Now, I'm more than happy for anyone who gets this vaccine, but we are only human and as a result our minds can be assholes sometimes.

That's why I'd feel like the asshole if I hung back, hoping a person in more need would get the vaccination in my place. Plus, I see a lot of doctors who I respect on TV saying, "If you can get the vaccine: GET IT. Whichever one is available." They don't mince words, and I believe in the science.

But most of all, I'm thankful for Gwenn's due diligence in this unexpected journey we've all been

on for the last year. And if getting this vaccine sooner rather than later makes her life less stressful, then sign me up and let’s get to pokin’.

I’ll blog more about the experience this week. In the meantime, stay as safe as your circumstances allow, and let’s do our best to make it out of this pandemic in one piece.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

*hepatitis B, HIV and hepatitis C, respectively

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