

## Where Do We Go From Here?

It seems that Covid-19 has left us with more questions than answers. And it is my observation that we humans tend to want answers...yesterday! I cannot stress enough, however, that this virus has been in our world for only seven (7) months.

Thanks to experiences with similar viruses in the past (SARS-CoV-2 shares 80% of its genome with SARS), and modern technology, what we have learned about Covid-19 in those seven (7) months is nothing short of incredible. Yet what we know seems, in many instances, to be just the tip of the iceberg. Every day more is being learned about the virus we've come to know as Covid-19. It is my guess that for several years to come we will continue to learn more about this virus. And as more is learned the guidance will likely change.

In the beginning (there we go again, back to the beginning!) the guidance was that it wasn't necessary to wear a face mask. Then it was learned that this virus was not only spread by droplets but also by aerosolization. With that piece of learning it became necessary to wear a face mask because simple processes, such as breathing, would spread the disease.

Along with those changes in guidance comes exasperation. Don't these "experts" know what they're doing?! They're constantly changing their minds on what we can/should/shouldn't do! The honest answer is that it is precisely because they know what they are doing that the guidance changes.

To me it's like learning to walk. As infants we don't have the muscle strength or memory to walk, so we start out by crawling. We learn to stand and bounce as someone holds us up. Then we begin to stand on our own. Then the lightbulb goes on and we take a tottering step, arms spread out for balance. Sometimes we fall down, only to get back up and try again. Then we take a few steps on our own. And then we RUN! Only to fall down and learn we have to walk a bit slower to maintain the balance needed to stay upright. That is exactly the process happening in science circles all over the world in an effort to learn all there is to know about Covid-19.

I am going to share part of an article I read (printed in several forums). The writing is attributed to Dr. Anthony Fauci. However, I have been unable to verify that he actually is the source of the information. That being said, the science & health aspects of the writing is spot on:

*"Chickenpox is a virus. Lots of people have had it, and probably don't think about it much once the initial illness has passed. But it stays in your body and lives there forever, and maybe when you're older, you have debilitatingly painful outbreaks of shingles. You don't just get over this virus in a few weeks, never to have another health effect. We know this because it's been around for years, and has been studied medically for years.*

*Herpes is also a virus. And once someone has it, it stays in your body and lives there forever, and anytime they get a little run down or stressed-out they're going to have an outbreak. Maybe every time you have a big event coming up (school pictures, job interview, big date) you're going to get a cold sore. For the rest of your life. You don't just get over it in a few weeks. We know this because it's been around for years, and been studied medically for years.*

*HIV is a virus. It attacks the immune system and makes the carrier far more vulnerable to other illnesses. It has a list of symptoms and negative health impacts that goes on and on. It was decades before viable treatments were developed that allowed people to live with a reasonable quality of life. Once you have it, it lives in your body forever and there is no cure. Over time, that takes a toll on the body, putting people living with HIV at greater risk for health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, diabetes, bone disease, liver disease, cognitive disorders, and some types of cancer. We know this because it has been around for years, and had been studied medically for years.*

*Now with COVID-19, we have a novel virus that spreads rapidly and easily. The full spectrum of symptoms and health effects is only just beginning to be cataloged, much less understood.*

*People testing positive for COVID-19 have been documented to be sick even after 60 days. Many people are sick for weeks, get better, and then experience a rapid and sudden flare up and get sick all over again. A man in Seattle was hospitalized for 62 days, and while well enough to be released, still has a long road of recovery ahead of him. Not to mention a \$1.1 million medical bill.*

*Then there is MIS-C. Multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children is a condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. Children with MIS-C may have a fever and various symptoms, including abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, neck pain, rash, bloodshot eyes, or feeling extra tired. While rare, it has caused deaths.*

*This disease has not been around for years. It has basically been 6 months. No one knows yet the long-term health effects, or how it may present itself years down the road for people who have been exposed. We literally \*do not know\* what we do not know.”*

As scientists, physician researchers, and engineers the world over continue to work to learn more about Covid-19, how to treat and/or cure it, and provide the means to manufacture any drugs, in huge quantities, there is one (1) very important thing to remember: we are currently living on the virus’s time. SARS-CoV-2 is calling the shots.

Anyone (or should I say everyone?), any age, any gender, or any ethnicity, is susceptible to becoming infected by Covid-19. Anyone infected by Covid-19 is capable of infecting others: even the 35% of the population that becomes infected but who develop no symptoms of the disease.

There is no way to know what form of the disease one will get. Will you be one who is infected but remains asymptomatic? Will you have nothing more than cold-like symptoms? Will you be sick enough to be hospitalized? Will you develop Covid pneumonia and require a ventilator in order to breathe? Will you spend 2 days in the hospital? Or 2 weeks? Or 2 months? Will your body be able to recover from this virus? Or will you be one of the death statistics? The question that keeps rearing its ugly head in my mind is, “How often are you willing to play Russian roulette with this virus?”

So...where do we go from here? The answer is that it is up to each one (1) of us to decide where we go. Personal behaviors will play a huge role in how we weather this storm:

- Wear a face mask when in a public building
- Wear a face mask outside if unable to maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other people not part of the home in which you live
- Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands
- Keep your hands away from your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid crowded places, inside or outside, whenever possible
- If you are not feeling well...STAY HOME!

If I do all of these things will that guarantee that I will not get Covid-19? Unfortunately, no. But following these guidelines, to the best of each of our abilities, will give us each, & thereby all, a fighting chance.

“Did you mean to scare us with what you wrote?”

Me....”Not really. I happen to believe that the more we know the better our decisions will be in order to protect ourselves and those we love.”

“Are you sure you weren’t trying to scare us?”

Me...”Well, maybe a little, if scaring you will help you to remember to follow the guidelines. You see, as was stated in one of the conferences I listened to: We’re not safe anywhere unless we’re all safe everywhere.”

Information from:

- CDC (Centers for Disease Control)
- NIH (National Institutes of Health)
- APHA (American Public Health Association)

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