



Dr. Sina McCullough and her two boys. (Courtesy of Dr. Sina McCullough)

MIND & BODY PREMIUM

How My Family Beat COVID-19

We knew catching COVID was inevitable, so we strengthened ourselves and prepared a protocol

BY SINA MCCULLOUGH November 29, 2021 Updated: November 29, 2021

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My family contracted COVID-19 in mid-summer of 2021. We fully recovered within 2 1/2 weeks and haven't experienced any long-term symptoms, or what's commonly referred to as long COVID. Others haven't been as fortunate.

As of November, according to a report from the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, between 3 million and 10 million Americans are experiencing symptoms of long COVID, which can include fatigue, pain, brain fog, neurological issues, mobility issues, and shortness of breath. I'd like to share how we kicked COVID-19's butt in the hope that our story brings encouragement to others.

specific time periods. This information is for educational purposes only. I'm not diagnosing or treating COVID-19: I'm simply sharing remedies that worked for my family.

Pre-COVID

In early 2020, when the world was in a panic and the United States went into lockdown, my husband and I analyzed the situation and came to the conclusion that COVID-19 would follow a similar fate to the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918, in which descendants of the original virus are still around today. Consequently, while we took precautions, we believed that no matter how long we quarantined, socially distanced, or wore a mask, we would eventually contract COVID-19. Therefore, while our family was already healthy and free of comorbidities, we decided to take precautions by preparing mentally, physically, and emotionally. We focused on several key factors:

Consuming Nutrient-Dense Foods: We already consumed nutrient-dense, organic meals on a daily basis, so we simply continued that practice. We also continued to abstain from eating foods that tend to be inflammatory, such as refined sugar and dairy.

Supplementing When Needed: Roughly twice a week, we supplemented our diets with vitamin C, B vitamins, and a multi-vitamin and mineral.

Reducing Stress: We added more rest into our daily lives by removing any unnecessary tasks or appointments from our schedule. Additionally, we added more laughter and play on a daily basis by doing things such as telling jokes at breakfast, playing board games in the afternoon, and chasing our children in the yard while playing a youthful game of tag.

Increasing Microbial Diversity: We consumed extra helpings of probiotics in the form of fermented foods and raw vegetables grown organically—or regeneratively, when possible. We also increased our intake of raw prebiotics, which are food for probiotics. Our favorite prebiotics include celery, onion, and jicama.

assist in the removal of toxins.

Practicing Gratitude: We already practiced gratitude daily, so we continued that practice. For example, before every meal, we each express gratitude for three things.

I believe our pre-COVID preparation plan was critical for our full recovery. Yet, this essential time period is often ignored by mainstream and social media, as well as health care practitioners. In our experience, following our pre-COVID preparation plan not only helped our bodies build resilience, but it boosted our mental health as well. Instead of taking a passive role and allowing fear to take over, we took charge and focused on something positive. We didn't realize it at the time, but our "can do" perception would ultimately be the most critical factor in our healing journey once we contracted COVID-19.

Sick From COVID

My two boys were the first in our family to present with symptoms, followed by myself and then my husband. In each case, the first symptom was extreme fatigue, which appeared suddenly and knocked us off of our feet. Aside from fatigue, each member of our family experienced a different combination of symptoms and required different remedies. Therefore, I've divided this section accordingly.

My Boys, Ages 11 and 7

Both of my boys presented with minimal symptoms, namely fatigue and fever. We diligently tracked the fevers, but we didn't suppress them. Instead, we assisted their bodies in the detoxification process, which is the intended purpose of a fever. We made sure that they remained hydrated and eased their discomfort by applying cold rags to the forehead and neck while also providing emotional support through soothing words and physical touch, such as holding them and rocking them in our arms.

The fevers persisted for a few hours, leaving fatigue as the only remaining symptom. After resting for roughly a week, while consuming nutrient-dense meals and supplementing daily with vitamin C, both of my boys fully recovered.

Fortunately, my daughter didn't present with any symptoms of a viral infection. I did supplement her diet with organic acerola powder to increase her vitamin C intake, but otherwise, I made no changes to her daily routine or lifestyle.

My Husband and Myself

Our first symptom, fatigue, was more extreme than what our children experienced. One moment, we felt great, and the next moment, it felt as though all of our energy had instantly drained from our bodies. Even keeping our eyes open was exhausting. All we could do initially was lay on the floor.



things not on the protocol that our bodies seemed to particularly crave:

Supplements: We consumed a supplemental form of vitamin C, vitamin D, B vitamins, zinc, and turmeric each day, along with herbal supplements, including black elderberry extract, Echinacea purpurea extract, Astragalus membranaceus root extract, Andrographis paniculata leaf extract, and Myrciaria dubia.

Essential Oils: Certain essential oils have also been shown to assist with COVID-19 infections. Consequently, each day, I rubbed diluted melaleuca essential oil on our lymph nodes. I also rubbed diluted peppermint essential oil under our noses to help clear the sinuses. We also utilized nasal rinses with salt water for congestion when needed.

Nutrient-dense Foods: At every meal, we consumed nutrient-dense, organic food. We were too fatigued to cook, but fortunately, we keep a supply of homemade, organic meals in the freezer. Therefore, I simply reheated those meals.

Salt: Interestingly, we both craved salt—a lot of salt. This wasn't part of the plan. We already liberally salt our food. However, our bodies wanted more. In fact, if I added those large quantities of salt to our food today, I don't think we could eat it.

Onions: Also of interest was my body's craving for onions. I love onions. However, my body wanted at least one large onion every day—usually raw. Interestingly, after I was healed, I discovered that onions have been proposed by some scientists as a possible early treatment for COVID-19 due to their anti-inflammatory, antithrombotic, and antiviral effects.

Herbal Tea: I drank various organic, herbal teas, depending on what my body needed at a given moment. The most helpful teas were dandelion root, burdock root, stinging nettle leaf, and lemon.

Fluid: We drank at least 70 ounces of clean, structured water each day.

settled in again.

There were a total of three fatigue cycles for each of us. Fortunately, my husband was two days behind me in terms of the cycles, so we were able to trade off with “baby duties.” On the days where all I could do was lay down, he tended to the baby and vice versa.

We also made sure not to overextend ourselves, even when we began to feel better, because you didn’t know if another cycle of fatigue would begin the next day. So, we conserved our energy by only doing the bare essentials, such as taking care of the kids and reheating food. Tasks such as cleaning the house and mowing the yard were put on the back-burner.

Movement: We realized by day two that moving our bodies was important. We needed to find a balance between rest and movement, because our bodies were aching from the infection as well as from immobility. It was difficult to find that balance, because each time we started to feel like we had energy and we began to move around, the energy quickly drained. Consequently, instead of “work-out partners,” my husband and I became “movement partners.”

We began by encouraging each other to walk around the house, which quickly progressed to walking up and down the driveway. We both discovered that once we overcame the initial hump of fatigue and pain associated with the initiation of walking, movement was a key component of our recovery. Every time we began our walk, within roughly three to five minutes, the pain subsided and our energy improved. Therefore, even though we didn’t want to move our bodies on most days, we gently added movement to our daily healing protocol.

Additional Measures

Using the above protocol, I recovered by 90 percent in roughly two weeks. I was back to my daily routine and only suffered from periodic episodes of decreased energy and mild brain fog—both symptoms of long COVID. So, what was the final missing piece of the puzzle? What helped me achieve the remaining 10 percent of recovery so that I could be fully healed and not be a “long-hauler?” Fasting.

symptoms or residual effects from COVID-19—and it's been five months. Interestingly, some scientists have recently begun supporting fasting for the possible prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

My husband, on the other hand, required additional interventions beyond my original protocol. As expected, he was affected the most by COVID-19, presumably because he has a genetic susceptibility to respiratory infections. He developed a deep cough, as well as fluid in his lungs. For roughly two days, the cough was so deep that he nearly vomited. Since COVID-19 infections can turn into serious conditions quickly, I tracked his cough diligently and, at one point, decided that if the cough hadn't improved within 24 hours, I would insist that my husband go to the hospital. To address the cough, we added two key steps to his healing protocol:

Natural Medicines: Three times per day, he breathed in natural medicines. I sliced red onions, placed them in a pot with filtered water, and brought them to a low boil. Then, I added two drops of melaleuca essential oil. Next, with a towel over his head, my husband leaned over the pot and breathed in the steam as deeply as possible for three to five minutes.

Garlic: Every night and two to three times throughout each day, we applied garlic to the bottom of his feet. Specific compounds in garlic have been shown scientifically to help fight COVID-19 by preventing the virus from entering your cells and activating antioxidant pathways to help your body fight the infection.

According to the American Chemical Society, one of the primary healing compounds in garlic can penetrate your skin, enter your bloodstream, and travel to various parts of your body, including your mouth, lungs, and nose. Consequently, I sliced garlic cloves in half, rubbed the cloves with olive oil, and taped them to the bottom of my husbands' feet. That might sound unusual, but it was ultimately the most effective treatment for his persistent, deep cough.

He never laid flat during the day. When he needed to rest, we made sure that he was propped up using pillows. Additionally, he continued to move his body even when the cough was serious.

2 1/2 weeks, and he has experienced no long-hauler symptoms.

Post-COVID

As I reflect on my family's healing journey from COVID-19, I'm convinced that while our protocol was effective, it was missing a critical piece of the healing puzzle: perception.

On day three of our healing journey, my husband and I realized that we were unknowingly holding onto the fear of COVID-19. After seeing footage from China and hearing numerous devastating stories on the news, we were afraid. What if we were among the people who seemed "healthy" but died anyway? What if months passed and we were still sick? At times during the sickness, we began to mentally spiral down the abyss of worry.

However, we knew that holding onto fear could keep us sick. Consequently, we made a pact. We decided to change our perception from fear to gratitude. We told our minds and our bodies that the infection was no more serious than the common cold and that we were completely equipped to beat it. We told ourselves that we would fully heal. And, with that shift in perception, the fear was released, which made room for gratitude.

We became grateful that we had contracted COVID-19. In fact, every day, our family spoke words of gratitude for being sick and gratitude for the ability of our bodies to fully heal. That might sound odd, but until we became sick, we didn't realize how tightly we held onto the fear of "what if." However, now we could finally release that fear and experience the mental freedom we had known before the pandemic. We no longer had to worry about if or when we would contract COVID-19 or if we would become a statistic. We had the virus, and we would beat it.

In that moment of release, a weight was lifted from our bodies. I felt as though, for the first time in nearly a year and a half, I could finally take a deep breath. We were all going to be OK; we were safe. Roughly two weeks later, that belief became our reality.

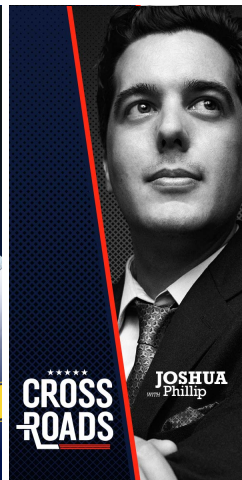


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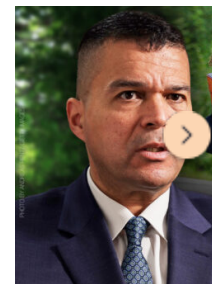
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