

María's Family: Struggling with COVID 19

My name is Maria. My family and I live in Queens, NY and have been a part of this awesome community for so many years now. I am a hemophilia A carrier. I have 3 kids: Miguel, 17, Josué, 13, and Paula, 6. Josué has hemophilia A (moderate).

The situation that we have experienced as a result of COVID 19 has been very strong and stressful for our family. We were not prepared to live such an experience. My husband and I lost our jobs and our family contracted the coronavirus, one by one with the exception of Josué.

We had a normal life, like everyone, with ups and downs financially. Our jobs allowed us to pay the rent for our apartment and to live a moderate life. The last day of classes in New York City was March 13, 2020. This was also the last week I worked and the last time I attended a gym (as is required as a part of my medical treatment to alleviate the pain in my joints caused by having lupus. I have always been very careful when attending places like the gym, disinfecting devices (whenever possible) before using them.

In the middle of the following week after the closing of schools, gyms and in general, everything in NYC, I began to feel muscle aches, high fever, dry cough, headaches and nausea; but I thought I had a cold or maybe the flu. I couldn't get the flu shot this time, because I was diagnosed with lupus. So, I started with homemade garlic, honey and lemon treatments, hot tea and Advil (which was the only medicine we could find at the pharmacy). I was feeling so bad, but because of the horror I was seeing on the news on TV, I was afraid to visit the hospital, as I was afraid of getting the coronavirus.

The closest hospital to us is "Elmhurst Hospital." By then, they were already treating several cases of coronavirus. I was afraid to go there to be tested, because I might get infected just by waiting there. Instead, I decided to stay and isolate myself (even though that's very difficult living in an apartment). After a few days, my son Miguel started to feel very bad with the same discomforts I had.

As Miguel started feeling better, my daughter Paula started to feel sick. Her case worried me a lot because she started with a fever of 103.2 degrees, muscle aches, vomit and dry cough. I had Motrin in my cabinet (pharmacies were sold out by these days) and I gave it to Paula, hoping that the fever would go down. She sweated a lot and she was very weak. I took her to bathe several times, trying to lower her temperature. The fever didn't go down, she got 104.6 and I panicked. I consider myself a calm woman in times of crisis, but I had never seen any of my children under these circumstances with such a high fever.

At night, she woke up very scared, as if she was having nightmares, and I was getting very stressed. After feeling terrible for a day and a half, the next morning, she woke up like nothing happened, asking me for breakfast and she started to play. I couldn't believe it.

While it took me two weeks to get rid of the virus for myself, my husband started with the same discomforts: high fever, muscle aches, dry cough and vomit. He spent the next two weeks at home feeling so bad. Eventually, he went to the hospital and they diagnosed him with COVID – 19.

Fortunately, my husband received treatment at the hospital and he is now feeling better after a total of 4 weeks. Thanks to God, Josué has not been infected. He has not had any health problems and has not had bleeds.

I was exposed to the virus by my trainer that helps with my therapies at the gym. My husband's boss tested positive as well after traveling to Greece, and Italy. When he returned to NYC, they told him to be quarantine

by himself. But instead of following instructions, he went directly to his restaurant where my husband worked, infecting his family and restaurant employees. He is still very sick at the hospital.

Both my husband and I still have discomfort in our throat and we are nervous about getting the virus again. We have a huge concern that neither of us have a job, we have the children at home, we go every day to look for food at the schools, but the lines are huge and we have had days that we have to go to another school because the food is over. We have applied for New York City unemployment insurance, but we haven't received any payments. We receive calls from service companies like cell phones asking for payments or they will cut the line (through this service our children can do their homework at school).

We are hoping that this nightmare will end soon, but as long as the virus is around, we have no jobs. Our anguish will continue because we have many financial needs and many families in our community are in the same conditions as us.