

How I Survived TB

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MARYLAND
Department of Health

Mildred's Story

Something's not right!

June, 2015

- Cough (non-stop)
- Sore Throat
- Feeling like something was always lodged in my throat

Diagnosis #1 : Strep throat, acid reflux

Medical care sought: Urgent care, family doctor, ENT

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ENT Visit:

“I’m not pulling your leg, coughing IS a symptom of acid reflux”.

“Take one Prilosec....if that doesn’t work, take two”.

Mildred's Story

Early December, 2015

- Previous symptoms continued.
- Weight loss and night sweats were 'mistaken' (by me!)
- Hospitalized and admitted for 3 days.
 - **Diagnoses:** Epiglottitis, pneumonia, acid reflux
 - Was referred to an ENT in Baltimore for epiglottitis and unknown symptoms
 - Medications : Predinsone, prilosec

Mildred's Story

I Have WHAT?

January, 2016

- Back in the hospital (7 days).
- X-rays showed nodules on lungs.
- Bronchoscopy, barium swallow test, biopsy, CAT Scan.
- Initial diagnosis of TB, isolation.
 - People visiting in space suits
 - the stigma of the masks.....
- Started TB Meds - **I hated them!**

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Where my REAL treatment began:

Washington County Health Dept.

- First call while in the hospital to set up home visit.
- Finally felt like someone 'got it'- they were angels.
- Home visits were like therapy- looked forward to their visits.
- Critical to my healing and acceptance of isolation.

Mildred's Story

Stigma...

The Contact Investigation:

- Word got out that I was very sick.....
- Family members and friends called the Health Dept.
- Disclosing names of coworkers, family to be tested.
- Biggest fear--that I may have infected someone with this awful disease.

Mildred's Story

My Support

- Family:
 - MOM- her food healed me!
“What do you want to eat today?”
 - Immediate family
- Medical Team
- Coworkers and friends
- The Countdown to freedom from isolation
*Marked it on the calendar!!!

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HOW did I get this?

- Multiple Sclerosis med: Gilenya (immunosuppressant)
- KNOW your medications and the possible side effects and risks
- Communicate this to ALL of your providers

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My message:

- Educate the pre-diagnosis providers that TB is real.
- Listen to the patient.
- Understand the human aspect of healing---it requires more than just the pills.
- Consider the support required for all those extended family, friends of those who are sick.

Mildred's Story

TB Champion

CDC work:

- Patient advocacy for supporting other patients with active TB.
- Spread message of empowerment.

Mildred's Story

- <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/mildredstory.htm>