Daughter’s First Super Spreader Birthday

It all started on our wedding night two years ago when our daughter was conceived. I tell you this now because I want to preface the story with this all being my one-year-old daughter’s fault. We wanted to teach her that you are never to young to have blame placed on you.

There we were a few weeks before the disaster. My wife and I were sitting down to discuss the possibility of having an in-person birthday for our one-year-old daughter in our backyard. My immediate response was “no. We can’t allow people to gather in our backyard during a pandemic.” It was quickly made clear that it wasn’t about what I wanted, or what was best to slow the spread. My wife felt the need to celebrate a birthday for somebody who is too young to even remember took precedence over safety.

When June 20th came (I like to refer to it as D-Day), we had done our best to keep the guestlist very limited. We required everyone to wear face masks, had contact free food, and discouraged close conversations. We did our best, but unfortunately our best wasn’t good enough. The thing about having a birthday party for a one-year-old is people are going to get DRUNK and all of your rules go out the window. By the end of the day everybody was hugging and kissing and hanging on each other as if the last three months of lockdown didn’t exist. It was my nightmare.

The first positive test didn’t take long. Two days after the party one of the biggest violators of human space called to let us know the dominos were about to fall. Then another buddy started feeling sick, then another. Then I started feeling not myself. By the time I had results back from my positive test, the rest of the 20 something guests had all gone to get tested. We awaited their results one by one, mortified. Only four of us had managed to contract it in the end, and I was a lucky winner. Four might not seem that bad, but when we consider the guy who likely brought it to the party gave it to his entire apartment complex and who knows how many of them spread it, you quickly begin to understand how rapidly this thing starts to compound.

My first symptom was a throbbing pain above my left knee. It felt like a dead leg, but ice wasn’t helping the pain go away. It got so bad I could barely walk or bend it. I could feel my eyes starting to sink in my head and I began to get chills. I knew Covid had arrived, when I sprinted home and ran 102 fever. My HMO refused to give me a test because “I wasn’t showing symptoms.” I told them I had aches and chills and a fever and they handed me a pink piece of paper that allowed me to drive another 30 minutes down the road to take a test there. Upon arriving at the second hospital, I was again refused entry because my symptoms weren’t severe enough for a test. It took me throwing a fit in the waiting room for them to admit me. I waited four hours for a test.

They asked if they could test me for strep, I said no because I recognized it is a money grab to bill my insurance since our health care system is a sham. He took a strep throat swab without my consent anyway. I was furious. I was then swabbed for Covid 19 and told I would have my results the following day. I waited four days for my results. Dealing with Kaiser Permanente was worse than dealing with Covid, and I was too sick to get off my couch for four days. It helped me realized how desperately our health care system needs an overhaul. I would not recommend using Kaiser Permanente especially if your life depended on it. They’d let you die in the waiting room if you weren’t showing symptoms of death.

By the time I got my results back my symptoms had gone away. I had to sit in my house for 10 more days and think about how irresponsible I had been (even though it was my daughter’s fault remember). Next time a hard decision is up for conversation, I will also do my best to remember not to let my wife call the shots!