

I Recovered From Covid-19: Here's What You Should Know



Join us Friday, May 29th at 11AM PST | Serena will be taking over our Instagram LIVE to answer questions and share her story.

Nutritionist and chef, Serena Poon is a long-time contributor who recently battled COVID-19 — and won. With such a full

spectrum approach to health and wellness (Serena is also a reiki master!), we knew [Serena](#) was equipped with quite a bit of knowledge and understanding to fight her battle well. However, we're also humbled by the current state of things and take nothing for granted, so we were relieved to hear that she was in full recovery. Here is [our chat with Serena](#), including important takeaway more of us should know...

The Chalkboard: Serena, we are so happy to hear you are on the mend and that you're willing to share your experience with COVID-19 which could help so many others. First of all, when did you realize you were coming down with the virus? Were there any telltale symptoms others should watch for in your experience?

Serena Poon: To be very honest, I was so focused on my sister's recovery (who also had COVID), that I did not really pay attention to my own symptoms at first, as they were not listed as "COVID-19 symptoms" on the initial list that was released during the first few weeks of March. Looking back, I was experiencing a burning sensation when I breathed. I called it "breathing fire," because that's literally what it felt like – whether I was breathing through my nose or through my mouth.

After my sister recovered, during the first week of April, I started to come down with fatigue and a low-grade fever that persisted sporadically for the next 2-3 weeks. Despite

the symptoms that were listed by the CDC at the time, my sister and I both had symptoms that were not listed.

Some of our symptoms were: fever (both high fever and low-grade); coughing (wet/productive or dry); shortness of breath or strained breathing; lightheadedness; breathing fire; chest pain; chest pressure; fatigue; extreme fatigue; mental fog; memory lapse; inability to focus/concentrate; erratic spurts of energy; loss or extremely subdued sense of smell and/or taste; chills; body aches and pains; sweating/drenched; soreness; weakness in limbs (like you're standing and your legs seem to give out).

TCM: Looking back, I'm sure you were taking every precaution, but was there an area of vulnerability in your lifestyle you'd warn others to be careful about or handle in a more specific way?

SP: I would say – rest and sleep! I was working harder than ever while I was initially sick, primarily because there was such a surge of people who needed support with immunity, nutrition, energy healing, counseling and coaching. In my efforts to serve others and to provide comfort, certainty and peace, I was not serving my own body. Part of the reason for this is because I knew that my immune system was working hard, fighting for me. The other reason is because I always held the belief that I would recover and be fine. Nonetheless, I had a pre-existing health issue that became

a cause for concern as I headed into my third week of managing consistent COVID-19 symptoms, and likely my 7th week of initial onset of symptoms (breathing fire).

Between navigating the symptoms of COVID and now aggravated symptoms of a pre-existing condition, my seventh and eighth weeks of COVID were much more difficult. So, my warning to others would be – listen to your body and don't push too hard, even with the best of intentions. When your body is fighting hard for you, give your physical body the time and space to fully rest, surrender to the slow down and allow the healing process to encapsulate every aspect of your present moment.

TCM: We're so glad to hear you're healing. What do you think your greatest advantages have been – in your line of work, you've clearly primed your body to be as strong and vital as possible. That must have helped make a difference?

SP: I am grateful and very blessed to have all the knowledge and experience that comes with my work. I had so many tools and resources at my fingertips within the comforts of my own home. With my practice of Culinary Alchemy, I am working on supporting, balancing and optimizing the whole body – the physical, the emotional/mental and the spiritual/energetic – using the integrative, holistic and function approach of physical nutrition, alongside spiritual

nutrition.

I also focus primarily on nutrient-density when it comes to foods for fighting inflammation and supporting immune, gut and adrenal health. I know exactly what foods to eat to nurture, balance and boost my system, as well as what tinctures, herbs, supplements and peptides to add to my routine. I also know what foods to avoid or minimize in my diet (ie, processed sugars, foods, dairy, etc). Despite having had 8 surgeries, the last one just over a year ago, my body is strong, and my immune system has been able to help me navigate a very busy, very demanding lifestyle without ever getting sick.

I also have a lot of holistic, alternative medicine equipment and 'bio'hacking' devices in the house, which I definitely used during my recovery. My years of knowledge and experience, in addition to a strong immune system, wellness practice and strong mindset to begin with, absolutely made a difference in my process and recovery. This is why I'm constantly sharing information and content to help others empower themselves! It's never too late to start and each day that we do something — whether it's a healthy food choice or a mindset practice, we are building, strengthening and preparing our immune system.

TCM: How did you care for yourself and bring your body into recovery. Knowing you are a teacher by nature, can

you share a list of protocols you used that you think made the biggest difference?

SP: Every day, I made sure to start with meditation and a gratitude practice – true connection of the energy of love from my heart to my physical body. This is a practice I always do, and I made sure to continue with this. I take the connection and I do my affirmations, which not only strengthen my mind, but also my body and as a direct result, my immune system. I then head downstairs and have my warm water with fresh lemon juice (organic if possible) — about 20 ounces.

I spend 20 minutes on movement – either jumping on the rebounder, stretching or a workout class online and I lay on a PEMF mat for 8 minutes. Of course, when I wasn't feeling well and on the days of fatigue, the 20 minutes of movement morphed into extended meditation time or just laying with a guided meditation on (Thank you, Deepak!).

The most important aspect of movement, in my opinion, is to get the lymphatic system and circulation going. I'm lucky that I have a PEMF mat that helps me do this when I don't feel well, but even a walk is helpful. For the first two months, we were practicing strict quarantine guidelines, so we did not even take a walk around the block! But we did make sure to get fresh air on the patios and on the roof.

Here are other protocols I found incredibly useful and use with my clients:

+ Simple 4-4-4 breathing Breathing in deep, fill your stomach, then your heart and then release — this is tool that not only helps to detoxify your body when it's fighting a virus or bacteria, but you are also oxygenating your system, strengthening your immune system and reducing inflammation.

+ Diffuse Wild Oils I also used a diffuser with a blend of wild oils: wild thyme, wild sage, wild bay leaf, wild oregano, cinnamon and cumin. I fell off my practice on some days, but during this time period, I actually restrengthened my breathwork practice. This is a powerful tool – even when you have some slight shortness of breath, do what you can and don't push too hard.

+ Nebulizers When respiratory issues were especially challenging, I used a nebulizer for glutathione, NAC and magnesium intake (nebulizers are easily available online). There were a few days that I felt like I needed some extra oxygen, and that helped a lot as well. (If you don't have access to an oxygen concentrator, there are cans of oxygen that you can buy online, which are often used at competitive sports events or at high altitudes.)

At the time, we were under full quarantine because we knew

that we likely had COVID, even before tests were made available, so knowing which supplies to have sent to the house was a blessing! However, stay-at-home orders are being lifted across the country and many non-essential wellness centers, health centers and medical offices are now open, so you can always pop by one to get an immunity IV or injection as well.

+ This Too Shall Pass Reminding yourself that it's all temporary, that within every challenge is a gift, is a really helpful tool to shift your perspective. I think that one of the best gifts about the last few months is the shift in perspective. On a daily, we are able to do this. Of course, there are days and moments where we want to be present with an emotion that may not necessary serve us, but is a release. That's totally fine. But looking at life through a big set of lens, that takes in the now, the past and the future, allows us to see that this is just a moment in time. So it takes something that feels overwhelming and it makes it manageable. Breaks it into smaller pieces. This is how I dealt with us both having COVID, with my other symptoms flaring up, with all the uncertainties of life, with work and clients.....just breaking things up into manageable pieces. Some things got let go of, but we circle back.

Editor's Note: Tomorrow, we're sharing Serena's full guide to the nutritional protocols she used and recommends to her

nutrition clients.

TCM: You are really tapped into the mind-body-spirit connection. How did this factor into your recovery? How did you manage your care from the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects?

SP: I believe in faith over fear. I believe in the power of our thoughts, the energy of love and that our bodies are incredible self-healing machines. I believe that we are powerful souls and that sometimes we need a little bit of help, but that the power to heal is within us.

From the very beginning, I believed that we were going to be okay. Even when my sister was at her sickest and we called her doctor, who suggested we go to the ER, we decided to tap into our intuition, made an educated and calm assessment of her symptoms and circumstances, and decided that we had the resources at home that met her needs. This is strictly based off of our own circumstances, my knowledge and understanding of her body, her symptoms and what the hospital protocols were at that time (oxygen support and ventilators if needed). I would not recommend that anyone else go against the advice of their doctor or physician – you have to make the decision that is right for you.

When it comes to balancing self-care from the emotional,

mental and spiritual angles, I would say that having a grounding practice and daily (sometimes all day, throughout the day!) affirmation practice is key.

Grounding can come in the form of breathwork, meditation, prayer, gratitude lists, journaling, walking or even the methodical nature of food preparation. Grounding keeps you centered and aligned in your own energy, even while there is chaos around you. Focus your attention on one thing at a time, as opposed to scattered thoughts everywhere.

The affirmations, for me, were powerful and empowering. I would repeat to myself, from the start of the day in the shower and throughout the day, that: *I am healthy; I am strong; I am powerful; I am light; I am love; I am supported, etc.* I will be the first to admit that I feel off my practice on some days. There are days that are just a wash! There are days that I indulged in comfort foods (usually GF and vegan pasta and pizza, I do love carbs). And those days are reset days that you allow yourself for mental and emotional balance. We start fresh again the next day.

I am also very mindful of eating to support my spiritual nutrition. So, for the days that I felt that my root chakra needed more support, I reached for those foods. The same for my heart chakra, my solar plexus, as well as all the other chakras. I also practiced distal reiki sessions several nights

a week before bed, sending healing energy out to people I had on a list and to our world as a whole. When sending energy out like that, I also receive energy, so that was also helpful.

Once of the most important things I did for my community, which actually ended up supporting my own emotional care as well, was starting the #LOVENOTE hashtag in March. Encouraging people to leave a love note (text message, voice note, post-it note, signs, etc) for their friends, loved ones, delivery workers, etc, was such a positive experience for everyone. I felt that it created even more healing energy around me as well. I would leave notes for people; people would receive them and send some right back. When people posted on Instagram with their pictures or videos and used the #LOVENOTE hashtag, I would repost and share it. The messages I received from people about this were full of gratitude and appreciation for uplifting and positive energy. I did this nearly daily for several weeks, and I stayed focused on positive news about kindness and humanity from around the world. The collective, conscious energy of love, kindness and unity is healing, strengthening and powerful for our well-being.

TCM: Beyond your list of insights and tips above, what do you want more people to know about avoiding or beating the COVID virus?

SP: Stay strong in your mind and your heart, stay focused on strengthening your immune system. The benefits of nourishing and supporting your body and your mind now during COVID-19, will have long-lasting positive benefits that can extend into the rest of your life.

I would continue to be mindful of the suggestions from the government – keep up with the washing and sanitation recommendations, social-distancing, wearing masks and being mindful that your actions are not just about your own well-being, but that of others as well.

I think it's important to get tested on a regular basis so that you're equipped with accurate knowledge for navigating your lifestyle. My sister tested positive for COVID nearly 3.5 weeks after recovery, after also testing positive for the antibodies and after nearly 7 weeks of carrying the virus. So, despite the fact that she had recovered and had not had any symptoms for weeks, she still had a high enough viral count to be contagious.

I personally did not have severe symptoms until I had already been exposed and living with the virus for almost seven weeks. It's important to remind ourselves that what we know about COVID-19 seems to evolve every other day, with recommendations that can also evolve, so it's best to practice social responsibility. Remember that COVID is not selective, anyone can get it and by getting COVID it doesn't

necessarily mean that you'll end up in the hospital or become incapacitated. COVID-19 is a serious virus and many of us can heal from it if we empower ourselves with the resources and tools to support your recovery.

Join us May 29th on Instagram Live with Serena and read part two of her story which outlines nutrition and supplement protocols.

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