

About IBD Podcast Episode 81: How Would You Feel if I Got COVID?

Episode Transcript

Amber Tresca

I'm Amber Tresca. And this is About IBD. It's my mission to educate people living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis about their disease, and to bring awareness to the patient journey.

Welcome to Episode 81. In the summer, we were all concerned about what school would look like in the pandemic and how we would make choices about what worked best for our families. Our family decided on the hybrid model. What this means is that my 10-year-old goes to in-person school every day for about two and a half hours and completes the rest of her instruction from home.

I try to check in with my kids regularly about how they're doing with hybrid school and how they think their friends and classmates are doing. But even now, when we're on top of each other all the time, we're often tending to our own work and my schedule has continued to be just as hectic.

That's why I decided to sit down with both of my kids and find out how they've been coping with the pandemic, what their worries are, and what their hopes are for the future. The last time I interviewed them was in 2018, on Episode 25. So: it was time to hear their voices again.

In this Episode, you'll hear my daughter, and in the next episode, which will be Episode 82 you'll hear my son. My daughter has a good understanding of what we're doing to keep ourselves and others safe and what it might mean if one of us became ill. She was really excited to be interviewed and to work together on developing this episode. I hope our conversation gives you some hope as well as a few laughs.

Amber Tresca

How old are you?

10-year-old 1:49

10.

Amber Tresca 1:51

And what grade are you in?

10-year-old 1:52

Fifth.

Amber Tresca 1:54

And what's school like? Right now, fifth grade.

10-year-old 2:00

Well, it's gotten pretty good. We actually haven't gotten any cases. Well, actually, we have, we did have a case, but it wasn't a kid, it was an adult. And we just had to sit out for a few days, but we came back. And I think school is going pretty good. We're, you know, we're doing hybrid and you know, things are going nicely. And the best part is that it's only three hours. And then like if, if we went back full time, it would be like oh my gosh, how much longer do I have to sit here?

Amber Tresca 2:37

You say case? What do you mean "case?" Case of what?

10-year-old 2:40

Like, case of COVID. Or probably just any sickness really.

Amber Tresca 2:47

And at this point, you have not been in full time school since last March. So I'm trying to try to

10-year-old 2:59

been like, seven it's been like six months? Yeah. 8, 7-8 months. Yeah.

Amber Tresca 3:04

And you finished up fourth grade.

10-year-old 3:05

Uh-huh. Fourth grade.

Amber Tresca 3:06

- completely remote, and then fifth grade, we had a choice for fifth grade of doing full remote still, or going into what they call hybrid. So what, what does this mean? hybrid, what's hybrid school for you in fifth grade?

10-year-old 3:25

Well, hybrid means that you're doing both, so you're not only doing remote, but you're also doing in person. So it's either cohort A, or cohort B for different times, so if you're in cohort A, you would be in the morning, so you would come in there, you'd be at eight o'clock, you know, it's still be three hours. And then you would have remote learning after school.

And then if you're in cohort B which I am in and you would do, you know, remote, remote things in the morning and you know, have like art or PE and you know, do that virtually and then you would come to school at 12 o'clock. And it would be in like the

afternoon and then you come back at like three, which is good because I am a little bit rushed with my things.

Amber Tresca 4:16

What are some of the things that you need to do when you go to school in order to make sure that kids and adults are not spreading the virus?

10-year-old 4:25

Well what you have to do is you definitely have to wear a mask, obviously. But you have to keep it on at all times. And you have to stay, stay at least six or three feet apart. And our tables. It's two, two people at a table. And, so for cohort A and cohort B they split it up. So it's like eight person eight people in this group eight people in that group. So it's less people. So it's two people at each table. And then you would also probably have to stay distanced, you know, when you're in the hallway, most of the kids are not the best at doing that, because you can't really, really predict if you're six feet or three feet. But we do pretty good at staying distanced. Also, if you want to take like a water break, you just like turn around and take, and take your mask off really quickly. And just take a water sip. And then you could also, we also do a mask break, and we will just go outside for 10 minutes, you know, be be socially distanced. And you know, just take off your mask and breathe for 10 minutes. But sometimes actually, probably all the time, we actually, everyone splits up. So it'll be way more than six feet apart, like people go to like a tree, and then people go to like an other tree. And like some people would like go to the rocks and like dig holes or something. I don't know why. But that's pretty much what we've been doing.

Amber Tresca 5:57

Do you remember the first day that we went back to school your first day of hybrid school?

10-year-old 6:03

Well, yes, I actually do remember the first time of hybrid. I was actually quite scared. I was I did not know what was going on. I was like, okay, what do I do? And you know, I was so stressed that, you know, I started sweating, and that the end of the day, I will come and I would be like sweating. So, and, then when we did was it was the trial, trial run?

Amber Tresca 6:30

Yeah, there was initially the first thing that we did, thank you for reminding me because I actually forgot, was that you went to school for a day prior to starting your real classes. So we went over, and you were there for like an hour, an hour and a half, something like that. And I think it was basically, like, to meet your teacher, just to understand how the drop off and the pickup procedure would go. Because there are some things that are involved there as well. Like, for instance, you need to use some hand sanitizer before you go into the school.

10-year-old 7:04

Yes, definitely. And what they used to do, they still probably ask you to do it now. But you would go in there. And actually, before you do that, they actually told us on the trial run that you probably have to before you come into school - take your temperature. Now, I, we actually started doing this. But later on, it didn't really matter so much. I think people kind of slacked on that. So I mean, we also had to like every mask break, we would always just get like a squirt of hand sanitizer also when we come in.

Amber Tresca 7:42

Yeah. So it's a lot to remember, right?

10-year-old 7:44

Yes, actually remember, because it's like so stuck in my mind.

Amber Tresca 7:49

Yeah, I just remember the first day probably at the, at the teacher meetup day. And then also on your first day, many of you hadn't seen each other. Now, we had seen some of your friends here and there, outside, at different points during the summer. But this was the first time that you were back together with your classmates. And, it struck me, because you guys all got in line, six feet apart. And we're getting ready to go into the classroom. And then there's only one class in the hallway at any particular time.

10-year-old 8:25

Yeah.

Amber Tresca 8:26

So we were standing outside. And obviously, we all know each other. It's a small neighborhood school, and you guys were very quiet. It was quiet. You guys weren't really talking to one another. I was a little bit concerned that in the beginning, you guys would be so excited to see one another that you would be running up and hugging and all of this. But, what happened was so the exact opposite that I was, I was a little worried at first because I thought maybe that school would turn out to be really stressful for you guys.

10-year-old 9:07

And yes, it was stressful. But the reason I think it was probably - and still now - it's very stressful for everyone. And people know that they're not supposed to do this and they're like afraid to do it. So they're just like, like my friend will come up to me. And she would be like Oh, hi. And then like she would like kind of like back up a little bit to avoid like trying to hug me.

Amber Tresca 9:30

Right, but now it's different. Now you guys are-

10-year-old 9:32

Yes, yes, now it's different.

Amber Tresca 9:33

Yeah. You guys are more what I would have expected to see from the very beginning. Although you do keep your distance. You guys aren't hugging on each other, you sometimes get a little close even outside. So I think everyone's gotten more comfortable. It's been quite some time since I've had to remind anybody to put their mask on or to put their mask over their nose. Which is lovely. So I think the kids are getting used to wearing masks while they're at school. It seems like it's actually going pretty well. It's exceeded my expectations, I think, for in-person school. I also want to ask you, though, about what it has been like to be physically distant this whole time, because we have had some outdoor playdates here and there, but for the most part, we've been keeping to ourselves. We've gone to the zoo a couple of times, we go to the beach a lot, but just our family. And I'm wondering how that has been for you and what your thoughts are on it. Because I think, due to the fact that we don't know how COVID-19 would affect me, we've probably been more strict about the physical distancing than other people are.

10-year-old 11:01

Yeah, so I think it's fine that, you know, we, we, I have to be outside with my friends. And you know, that's, that's good. About, so, for the beach, I think it's fine that we're despite ourselves. And I think we've probably been good on things, you know, we haven't really done any like inside things. We have done a lot outside. And I think it's whatever is appropriate for this kind of time is what I'll have to stick with. So I just think that's pretty good. Oh, and the zoo. The zoo is good, because we've only been there with a few friends. And, you know, we've all kept our distance. And, we come early, so, there's, like, nobody there, so that's good.

[MUSIC: About IBD Transition]

Amber Tresca 12:06

What do you think is the thing that you miss most about not having to be physically distant and to stay at home?

10-year-old 12:19

I haven't really missed much. I do miss, like going inside, because my friends, and especially since some of my friends, you know, they're always like baking and then I'd bake with them. And we would make like cinnamon rolls, cookies. Sometimes. And that was really great. And then sometimes when I go on time my friends you know, we do like drawing we you know, play Mario Kart. And you know, we also you know, jump in and bug bear. Yeah, we play Roblox and it's been. I've just missed that.

Amber Tresca 12:58

You miss being in person with your friends?

10-year-old 13:02

Yeah.

Amber Tresca 13:02

And as it gets colder. It's been more challenging. To be outside. You don't wanna be outside.

10-year-old 13:09

Yeah. Especially since it's getting to winter now. And you can't, if we're only allowed to be outside and we want to go with a friend. We can't really because it's super cold outside. So it's like getting less and less of the opportunities to be with a friend.

Amber Tresca 13:25

Mm hmm. What do you think you want to do when it's okay for us to go and go back to life the way that it was? Before the pandemic?

10-year-old 13:37

I think I would want to do everything. I would go to Disney. I want to go back to West Palm Beach. I would want to go everywhere, just, everywhere in general that we've been to.

Amber Tresca 13:48

It sounds like travel though. You want to get back to traveling again.

10-year-old 13:51

Yeah. I love travel.

Amber Tresca 13:54

I know you do ever since you were very small. We took you everywhere that we went with us obviously. And you always did really well. And you like riding on the plane. car was not your favorite.

10-year-old 14:09

And I usually get carsick but I'm not so carsick that I throw up it just feels like I'm going to but I don't. And um even if you mentioned is going to a hotel, I will be like yeah, cuz I like going out hotels cuz they're always so fun. I don't know why.

Amber Tresca 14:28

Do you think that you're doing okay during this time?

10-year-old 14:33

I think you know, things have been going pretty well.

Amber Tresca 14:36

Mm hmm. Are you worried about getting sick with COVID?

10-year-old 14:42

Not really, because if I do since I'm a child, I know won't be as bad for me as it is for people who are a lot older but I still think just because I'm a child doesn't mean that it

will be great. So, um, I think I'd probably be okay. Probably just have to like stay in bed a lot. And I know, drink soup all day, although I'm not a fan of soup. But as you probably have to do that.

Amber Tresca 15:14

Are you concerned about my getting sick with COVID? Or your dad?

10-year-old 15:20

Yes. Because you guys are older than me, and it could be more of a risk. And if you guys get sick, who will, like, take care of us? Because, you probably obviously have to be somewhere. And, um,

Amber Tresca 15:43

Where would we have to be?

10-year-old 15:46

I don't know, probably in bed or in the hospital, or...

Amber Tresca 15:50

Hopefully not the hospital.

10-year-old 15:51

Not the hospital, but like, I don't know, honestly.

Amber Tresca 15:56

We'd have to be, we'd have to be separated, probably.

10-year-old 15:59

Yeah.

Amber Tresca 15:59

If one of us got sick.

10-year-old 16:00

and but I'm more worried about what happened to you guys more than being separated? Because you know, things you don't know what could happen. And I just think that, we'll try and be more careful if one of you ever gets it.

Amber Tresca 16:21

Do you have anything else that you want to add?

10-year-old 16:24

Okay, so my question for you is, how would you feel if I got COVID?

Amber Tresca 16:31

Well, logically, I know that you are young and you're healthy. And so you would do well,

there's a small chance that you could have a more serious course. And we would have to deal with that. But I also know that we have excellent resources where we are here, and we're very privileged in that way. I think while you were ill and recovering, I would be very anxious, I don't know that I wouldn't be able to sleep, well, I don't think that I would want you to be separate from me. So I would probably still want to be near you. And that would mean that we would have to be very careful. The thing that worries me most is that I could unknowingly pick up the virus, for instance, running an errand or doing something where I can't be distanced from other people, and bringing it home and making you or your brother or your father sick. That would, that would be really upsetting to me. And that's probably the thing that I worry about most.

10-year-old 17:52

Aww. So here we are, if I ever do get, COVID or any of us get COVID we will have to stay in bed, and you would probably have to like put a slot, like make a slot in the door and like slide food, and water through it. And you know, like a blanket. And you would probably like use like text or walkie talkie if you need anything. And they would probably have to like not talk. So if they, if any one of us like, if that person in bed talks, they could probably be spreading what they already have. So you just have to like stay in bed. Just be like okay, gotta get my phone. "Mom, can you get me some chicken? Chicken won't come through the slot."

Just like a bag of chicken. "Okay, thanks."

And then you know, and then and then if it was like, I don't know, for like a few days or maybe a week, it would be funny. Because then like your text slot would be like, so full. There'd be like so many texts from you wanting food and water and blanket, and whatever. So I think it's funny, but that's probably where you will have to do.

10-year-old:

It's not easy to talk about things that are bothering us. That's why I have these 5 tips for kids on how to talk to their parents.

Tip number one. Think about what you want to say ahead of time. If you have something you want to talk about, make a plan about how you'll bring it up. That will make it easier for you.

Tip number two. Pick a good time and place to talk. It's better to have a good talk when you're feeling like it. It's also helpful to find a place where you will be comfortable and won't be interrupted.

Tip number three. Try to be honest. It's OK to ask for help from your parents when you need it. They'll want to know if you are worried or unhappy about something.

Tip number four. Be patient with your parents. Parents don't always understand everything about being a kid in the modern days so you might have to help them with some things.

Tip number five. Take a break and talk again another time if you need to. Sometimes it takes more than one time to talk over everything that you're feeling.

Amber Tresca

Hey, super listener! Special thanks this week goes to my daughter for sitting down with me to talk about the pandemic and for helping me write some tips for kids on talking to their parents. My daughter doesn't have social media handles for you to follow her but I will ask you to do something different instead. My daughter is the kindest person I know. So this week she asks that you do something kind for another person.

I, however, am on social media and you can find me across all platforms as @aboutIBD and on my web site at aboutIBD.com.

Thanks for listening, and remember, until next time, I want you to know more about IBD.

10-year-old 21:22

Okay, good job. Now, any questions left for me?

Amber Tresca 21:29

I think I think that was all the questions I was going to ask you.

10-year-old 21:33

Okay.

Amber Tresca 21:34

You good?

10-year-old 21:36

Yeah.