

HOME ALONE OR TIME OUT: A PATIENT'S STORY ABOUT TB ISOLATION

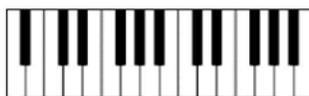
If your health care provider decides that you may have tuberculosis, or TB, you will be placed on home isolation so the disease doesn't spread to others. This means that you can't leave the house except for medical care. This is one patient's story about being on home isolation.

"You can not leave your cottage. No one is to come in. If anyone asks why you can't go to a meeting or a party, say something came up. Stand in front of the mirror and say something came up."

Something was about to come up. I felt sick to my stomach. I was in total shock and then the tears welled up in my eyes.



I thought about people sentenced to jail for life and little children sent to their rooms to be punished. Was I being punished? My inner voice came out loud and clear. Crying isn't going to do any good. Get a grip on your emotions. Don't just sit there and feel sorry for yourself. You are lucky. You have some resources. Use them.



Take it out on the piano and bang away. No one can hear you. Sing

away and try to outdo the noise on the vacuum cleaner. No one is there to say, "Who is that person who is off-key?" "Patience and fortitude" I cried out loud and clear.

Keep busy. Start diving into those things you have put off. Clean out your clothes closet and dresser drawer. Mend the things that need mending. Tidy the kitchen. You longed for days like this and now you have them.



Write notes or get on the computer and send e-mails to friends. Send funny ones that have been sent to you. Laughter and a good sense of humor will get you through any bad situation.

Curiosity was in the neighbor's minds. Why can't Mary come out and play?

If your energy is low, sit quietly and read the books you have been putting off reading. I picked up my Bible and began reading from the back to the front. You, on the other hand, might turn to your own spiritual comfort.



If you don't like to read, turn on the TV. Be a couch potato and watch a good movie or catch up on the news or

sports. Take a nap. Do whatever you want to do, anything that snaps you out of yourself—the "why me"? Eat well. No one is watching you eat that last cookie.

Exercise. Call up a friend. Make a schedule and have fun by not following it. Sleep late. Tell your friends not to call you early. If you have children, this is a time for them to show you their love.

You're locked up and the door was slammed on you but it isn't the end of the world. Things could be worse. Write down the things you don't like about yourself vow to change. And when it is all over and you are free at last, shout for joy. Tomorrow is another day. Live it well and be thankful.



*Mary Blanton Easterly
September 2009*

Mary is 85 years old, a widow with 5 children, 10 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. She lives alone in a cottage in a retirement community.