

## New Normal: Dorm Room Quarantine

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*In our regular segment, "New Normal," Nautica Nolden talks about her experience quarantining in her dorm room at New York University for two weeks.*

MICHEL MARTIN, HOST:

It's back to school time. But, of course, this year looks very different all across the country. Over the next few weeks, we're going to hear from you about what your new normal looks like. Today, what happens when your dream school just isn't providing...

(SOUNDBITE OF DOORBELL RINGING)

NAUTICA NOLDEN: I think we just got lunch here. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: You're welcome.

MARTIN: That's Nautica Nolden, a freshman at New York University who started her first semester of college quarantined in her dorm room for two weeks. This was mandatory for students traveling from outside the tri-state area and living in the dorms. Nautica and her other peers couldn't leave their rooms, so they relied on NYU to hand deliver their meals to them. That exchange at the top - that was Nautica receiving her lunch. That was 4:15 p.m. This isn't the first time food arrived late. We discovered Nautica's story on TikTok, where she posted this.

(SOUNDBITE OF VIDEO)

NOLDEN: Quarantine meals that NYU feeds us that just make sense.

MARTIN: The TikTok goes on to show an empty desk and reads, breakfast - nothing. Lunch - nothing. Dinner - all three meals delivered at 6 p.m. Cereal with no milk and warm orange juice, watermelon salad and watermelon salad with chicken.

(SOUNDBITE OF VIDEO)

NOLDEN: Watermelon salad, watermelon salad.

MARTIN: We had to know how that was.

NOLDEN: The watermelon's spicy 'cause it has balsamic vinegar and pepper and seasoning and oregano all over it. So I don't even know what it is. It's all spicy. I don't know what the watermelon's purpose is in it.

MARTIN: Let's be honest. Food is just about the only thing a lot of us think about these days. For many, food is what breaks up our plodding days turned weeks turned months of this pandemic. And Nautica definitely missed making her own food choices or choice.

NOLDEN: I eat Chick-fil-A every day (laughter).

MARTIN: But besides the food, being alone for two weeks after living with your family for 18 years sounds like a harsh change - or so we thought.

NOLDEN: I live with my great-grandparents, so it's very quiet in the house all the time. And I'm always by myself, so, like, I'm used to this. I'm just - I'm relaxing. I'm having me time.

MARTIN: Nautica also used the quiet time to get to know her eventual roommate.

NOLDEN: We were really going to use this opportunity when we thought we were quarantining together to get to know each other and bond and stuff, but we didn't have that. So she's just been FaceTiming me from three doors down.

MARTIN: We talked to Nautica a few times during her quarantine. By the end of the two weeks, she and her roommate were having a bit of a hard time. But things are looking up. Nautica has now moved in with her roommate, and they are determined to stay on campus. They have a cleaning schedule, and they remind each other to pack hand sanitizer and extra masks. And the school will continue to set limits on social interactions within the dorms.

NOLDEN: We're only allowed to have, like, us and our roommate in our room. They haven't said anything about the common meeting spaces, like the practice rooms and the study lounges in the dorm buildings. So I think we are allowed to be around each other then, but we have to wear masks every time we leave our dorm room.

MARTIN: Despite the restrictions, Nautica is just happy to be at her dream school, even if it wasn't exactly what she expected.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/09/05/910102511/new-normal-dorm-room-quarantine?ft=nprml&f=1003>